# TELOS

Number 43 Spring 1980

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## a quarterly journal of radical thought

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# THE CRISIS OF BUREAUCRATIC COLLECTIVISM*

## by Antonio Carlo

*Comecon in Crisis*

For the communist countries of Eastern Europe, 1976 was a serious turning point that can only be compared to 1956. There was no lack of violent upheaval (Poland) but the real problems stemmed from the economy. More than a decade had passed since 1965, the year of the reforms, and it is now possible to evaluate their impact.[1] Before doing so, however, it is necessary to provide a brief analysis of the situation of Comecon countries in 1976.

*German Democratic Republic.* 1976 marked the beginning of tensions even at the political level (the replacement of Prime Minister Sindermann with Willy Stoph, delay in the approval of the 1976-80 plan). Increases in productivity reached their upper limit; the objectives of the current five-year plan were rather modest, the pressure of consumption (in the most consumerist of the Eastern European countries) could not be contained by planning and generated a widespread social malaise; the harvest was bad for the third straight year and the foreign trade debt in 1975 reached a level of 10.7 billion marks.[2] The East German miracle is in its last leg and those who have discussed it in the Western press should be reminded that the 1963 reforms did not solve a crucial problem of streamlining and modernizing the industrial structure and that the East German planning system has been a permanent source of problems even after the 1963 reforms.[3]

*Czechoslovakia.* Here, too, there were growing difficulties which in September 1976 caused the firing of three government members. Industry on the whole kept growing, but the agricultural sector and consumer goods were unable to keep up and the 1977 forecasts were relatively low.[4] According to

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*Originally published as part III of *Saggi di Sociologia Marxista* (Salerno, 1979), pp. 143-200. English translation by Teresa Jackson.

1. For reforms in East Germany, see J.M. Vincent, "La Riforma della Pianificazione in RDT," in *Problemi del Socialismo*, second series, No. 3, pp. 547ff. Cf. also K. Sontheimer and W. Bleek, *La République Democratique Allemande* (Paris, 1975), pp. 162ff. On the Hungarian reforms which were much more radical than those in East Germany, see A. Hegedus, *La Strutture Sociale dei Paesi dell'Europa Orientale* (Milan, 1977), p. 13. For a general evaluation, see J. Kosta, *Sozialistische Planwirtschaft* (Opladen, 1974), pp. 129ff.

None of these reforms has resembled the Yugoslav ones (restoration of capitalism). The only ones that came close — the Hungarian ones — has been blocked within the framework of the old system. Thus, G. Sokoloff's *L'Economie Obéissante* (Paris, 1976), p. 76, is wrong in arguing that Hungarian reforms have successfully restored a genuine "economic" mechanism, i.e., the market in the place of the old administrative mechanism, since he confuses the reforms with their implementation. Cf. A. Joyal, "La Réforme Economique et les Effets de la Crise Mondiale," in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, No. 263, p. 21.

2. Cf. M. Lucbert, "R.D.A.: Malaise Social," in *Le Monde L'Année Economique et Sociale. 1976: l'Espoir Déçu* (Paris, 1977), p. 72.

3. Sontheimer and Bleek, *op.cit.*, p. 166.

4. Cf. M.L., "Tchecoslovaquie: des Difficultés Reconnues," in *Le Monde. L'Année Economique, op.cit.*, p. 72.

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members of the exiled Czechoslovak opposition, relations with the West became complicated and the nature of trade with the West was becoming similar to that of an underdeveloped country [5] — something that could cause headaches for the future balance of payments.

*Poland.* 1976 was a disastrous year. For the third straight year, the harvest was bad, while the debt with the West reached 10 billion dollars [6] — an incredible sum if one thinks of the country's economic structure. McDonald has pointed out that several years earlier, when faced with the problem of modernizing its industrial apparatus, Poland, more so than other Comecon countries, gambled on the purchase of costly Western technology, offering in exchange low technology goods available at low prices. The result was a ruinous deficit that forced the government to impose austerity measures and to seek a reduction of consumption in 1976. These were followed by mass reactions from workers (the Random movement), which forced the government to retract.[7] Now the government has adopted a more consumer-oriented attitude for the future, but earlier structural problems have not been resolved.

*Hungary.* This is another miracle that has gone by the wayside. In 1976, industrial production did not increase, agricultural production remained stationary (against a projected increase of 4 percent), prices rose more than expected, and strong trade links with the West risked creating problems similar to Poland's.[8]

*Bulgaria.* Despite some gaps, the global figures for industrial production have been revealed for 1976 (although Bulgarian statistics leave a lot to be desired). While the goals for construction and for labor productivity in industry were not achieved (7 percent against the planned 8.8 percent), net national production grew only 7 percent against the planned 9 percent.[9]

*Romania.* This is the only positive exception. The 1976 objectives were achieved, but during that year the rate of accumulation was the highest within Comecon countries (32 to 33 percent of the national income),[10] which means an extraordinary compression of consumer goods. In other words, Romania is proceeding with its old model of superinvestments, which favors production of investment goods over consumer goods,[11] but, as already

5. Cf. J. Palach Press, "When Will Czechoslovakia Become an Underdeveloped Country?" in *Critique*, No. 7, pp. 69ff. Cf. also Karel Kovanda, "Czechoslovakia in Transition," *Telos*, No. 31 (Spring 1977), where he points out that the (relative) normalization, carried out after 1970 with the moderate implementation of economic reforms meant to remedy some of the most blatant problems of the old system, is now over.

6. Cf. M.L., "Pologne: Les Travailleurs font Achec à la Hausse des Prix," in *Le Monde. L'Année Economique, op.cit.*, p. 72.

7. Cf. O. McDonald, "Workers' Opposition in Poland," *Critique*, No. 7, pp. 73ff.

8. Cf. M.L., "Hongrie: Retrouver l'Equilibre," in *Le Monde. L'Année Economique, op.cit.*, p. 73.

9. Cf. A.T., "Les Resultats Economique de la Bulgarie en 1976," in *Le Courrier des Pays d'Est*, No. 204, pp. 26ff.

10. Cf. J.L., "Romanie: Objectifs Dépassé," in *Le Monde. L'Année Economique, op.cit.*, p. 73.

11. Cf. M. Lavigne, *Le Economie Socialiste Europee* (Rome, 1975), p. 623, where it is pointed out that production in the industrial sector goes from 45.5 percent of pre-war years, to

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discussed elsewhere, this model entails explosive contradictions. This was the situation in 1976, which, had it not been for several unexpected and exogenous factors, could have been worse. But 1976 sounded a warning concerning extremely serious structural problems in Eastern Europe.

The Eastern European press has pointed out that the Comecon countries have reached a level of intensive development[12] because increases in production are more and more the result of increases in productivity rather than increases in workers employed. But is this correct? Between 1961 and 1970, labor productivity in Romania and in the Soviet Union grew 6.6 percent and 5.8 percent a year, while between 1971 and 1974 the figures are 6.2 percent and 4.8 percent respectively. Despite the unimpressive initial figures, the growth rates declined. There was improvement in Czechoslovakia and in East Germany, but it was certainly not a spectacular growth: annual growth went from 3.5 percent to 4.6 percent in Czechoslovakia, and from 4.5 percent to 5.5 percent in East Germany.[13]

In Western industrial countries such as France, Japan and West Germany, the rates of productivity increases in industry were similar,[14] and started from a much more intensive base. The figures for Poland are impressive: from 4.4 percent a year (1961-70) to 7.9 percent a year in the following four-year period. But these figures must be taken with a grain of salt. The quality of Polish products is disgraceful (even in terms of average low Eastern European standards). A study estimated that in 1972 faulty Polish products added up to 10 billion szloty: 20 percent of radios sold were unusable, 60 percent of cars had faulty electrical systems, etc.[15] In 1976, the government had to remind Polish managers that the production of unserviceable goods could have penal consequences.[16] Increases in productivity within sectors with such high rates of rejection is not an accomplishment but a liability: more rejects are produced. For Hungary also the figures for the periods under consideration (1961-70 and 1971-74) were neither decisive nor consistent (from 4.7 percent to 6.5 percent a year). Furthermore, the Hungarian model is characterized by a poor use of labor power. The seemingly liberal 1968 reforms (presumably,

62.8 percent (1960) and to 69.2 percent (1970). These are figures surpassed only by East Germany and the Soviet Union.

12. Cf. "I Risultati Economici del 1974, nei Paesi Membri del Comecon," in *Quaderni Cases*, Nos. 3-4 (1975), pp. 208ff. (This is a translation of an article in *Neues Deutschland*, Feb. 27, 1975.) Cf. also J. Wilczynski, *Technology in Comecon* (London, 1974) where he points out that East Germany and Czechoslovakia are in the intensive phase of development, while the rest of the Comecon are in a transition phase.

13. Cf. BIT, *L'Emploi, la Croissance et les Besoins Essentiels* (Geneva, 1976), p. 82.

14. Cf. T.S. Chacaturov, *L'Economia Sovietica nella Fase Attuale di Sviluppo* (Milan, 1977), p. 161.

15. Cf. J. Argout, "Comment vit-on Aujourd'hui dans les Pays de l'Est," in *Economia*, No. 36, p. 93. The situation of the Polish consumer is rendered even more difficult by the fact that automobiles such as the Polski 125 (built through a FIAT license) are exported. Cf. U. Ruffolo, *Il Sistema Sovietico fra Stalin e Breznev* (Rome, 1974), p. 51. Of course, since the exported automobiles are those who are without defects (otherwise, they could not be sold) the Polish consumer ends up with rejects.

16. Cf. C. Levinson, *Vodka-Cola* (Paris, 1977), pp. 19-20; and C. Ardissone, *Classi Sociale e Lotta Politica in Polonia* (Milan, 1977), pp. 92ff.

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they were to substitute administrative mechanisms with economic ones) were suspended before fully implemented, with serious consequences for the utilization of labor power. The fact that there is no real labor market and wages are not determined by the free play of supply and demand (which would give ample autonomy to managers) creates absurd situations, which explain why the mercantile aspects of the reforms were blocked. According to Barreto, "Many plants seek to evade the consequences of this strict control (*the control of planning over wages*) by employing unskilled (badly paid) labor power, not in order to use it, but in order to make it possible, through these low wages, for other workers to receive higher wages. This phenomenon, despite all its shortcomings from a social viewpoint, is actually one of the main causes of a general lack of labor power (which is untrue)."[17] In other words, the centralized and planned control of the wage fund and the fact that it is allotted to plants according to the number of employees working there creates problems. In order to have a little leeway with wages, managers falsify the number of employees, so that part of the labor power (for which there is an over-demand) despite being formally employed, is not really used.[18]

In the mid-1970s, productivity was still a problem and recent figures show that, compared to the West, development in Eastern Europe has remained essentially extensive.[19] In Eastern Europe, only 13 to 24 percent of the working population is employed in non-productive activity, compared to 25 to 40 percent and more in the West.[20] What this means is that the intensive development of productivity in the West (primarily the industrial sector) creates few jobs and therefore pushes the demand for labor toward the service industries, where the state, for socio-political reasons, creates artificial jobs. Eastern European countries, on the other hand, must concentrate a much higher percentage of the population into productive sectors in order to achieve a level of production comparable (in quantitative and non-qualitative terms) to the West.

During the 1960s, the rate of increase of the A sector of industry (investment goods) was always higher than the B sector (consumer goods).[21]

17. Cf. J. Barreto, "Gestao Economica e Poder Operàio na Hungaria," in *Anàlise Social*, second series, No. 45, p. 81.

18. Furthermore, Hungary has all the old ills which characterize Eastern European countries: absenteeism, fluctuation of labor power, low level of commitment and even contraband labor, i.e., work carried out privately by the worker with tools and materials taken from the workplace, and sometimes during official working hours. Cf. M. Haraszti, *Stückhohn* (Berlin, 1976), pp. 101ff.

19. According to Wilczynski's recent analysis, technology in the Comecon countries is five to 15 years or more behind the West, and there does not seem to be any possibility of closing this gap. In fact, if anything, Wilczynski's evaluations are biased by his sympathies for the East European regimes. From his book, it seems that the gap is 15 years and more, rather than five. We only have to consider that in the field of computers, in 1972 Comecon countries were producing a little over six percent of world production, furthermore, of extremely bad quality, while their contribution to world industrial production was about one third. Cf. Wilczynski, *op.cit.*, p. 352.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 28. Cf. also Lavigne, *op.cit.*, pp. 616-618.

21. Wilczynski, *op.cit.*, p. 33. The only noticeable exception was Hungary. But this was more apparent than real because in 1970 production in the A sector covered 63.9 percent of total

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What are the results of this continuing imbalance? East European consumers still have to wait two or three years to have a car or express their repressed consumption desires by eating a lot and badly.[22] The dietary intake of the East European consumer includes many cereals and little protein. Thus, in France, per capital consumption of bread fell from 182 kilograms in 1900 to 66 in 1973-74, while in the Soviet Union it is still at 143 kilograms.[23] Furthermore, the fact that for certain goods East European consumers must wait two or three years (for a car), when they finally do obtain the desired goods, they make them last much longer than in the West. Take the most important hard consumer good, the car, and the most consumerist East European country, East Germany. [24]According to United Nations statistics, in 1971, 134,300 cars were manufactured in that country for a population of about 16 million, i.e., roughly one car per every 120 persons. In Italy, 1,701,000 cars were produced: one for every 32 inhabitants. However, if we consider the cars circulating in 1971 in Italy and in East Germany, the gap is considerably reduced. In Italy, there is one car on the road for roughly every five persons; in East Germany there are 1,267,800 cars on the road, one for every 12.5 to 13 persons.[25] The gap in circulation is much lower than the gap in production only because of the incredible number that can be seen on the roads of wealthy "consumerist" Prague.[26]

Recent observations concerning progress of Eastern European agriculture in comparison to the West are also problematic.[27] If there are occasionally higher rates of development for products than in neo-capitalist countries, this is because of the lower base of departure for Eastern European countries. The gap is enormous. Looking at East Germany, which has the most advanced East European agriculture, in 1971, one agricultural worker produced food for 25 persons against 30 to 50 in neo-capitalist countries and the 59 persons in the United States. Also worrisome is the low return on investments, which, in recent years have been heavy in agriculture. Similarly, peasants spent more time on their private plots than on collective farms, so that in Hungary only 10.3 percent of the arable land is in private hands, but it produces 60

industrial production against 66 percent of 1960 and 44.8 percent of the pre-war years. Thus, it was only a minor adjustment.

22. Cf. Argout, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

23. Cf. A. Piettre, *Les Grands Problèmes de la'Economie Contemporaine*, vol. II, "Les Pays Socialistes" (Paris, 1977), p. 73.

24. Sometimes statistics do not provide an accurate portrayal of the situation. For example, a survey revealed a large number of washing machines sold in Czechoslovakia. But the very same Czech authors of the survey point out that automatic washing machines have only recently become available, which makes a purely numerical comparison with the West untenable. Cf. A. Cervenkova, "Diffusione dei Beui di Consumo Durevole," in *Quaderni Cases*, Nos. 10-12 (1974), p. 392.

25. These data come from the *U.N. Statistical Yearbook* of 1972.

26. The situation of East European consumers is worsened by the low quality of goods (and in many cases, ingenious ways must be found to maintain them for a longer period of time than in the West). According to Wilczynski, during the late 1960s, 61 percent of Czechoslovakia exports (and Czechoslovakia is one of the leading Comecon countries) was below world standards. Cf. Wilczynski, *op.cit.*, pp. 144-145 and p. 153.

27. Cf. F. Cohen, *I Sovietici* (Rome, 1976), pp. 224ff.

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percent of agricultural goods, and in the Soviet Union private land, which is negligible, contributes a fifth of the total agricultural product in the early 1970s.[28]

Given this state of affairs, it is clear that the reforms of the 1960s failed in their objectives. Old problems remained unchanged, and it is clear that if they are not eventually solved, development will be blocked as it was during the disastrous years between 1961 and 1964. Yet, today the situation is more serious than in the early 1960s, because of a new problem: the huge trade deficit with the West. The percentage of Eastern European trade with the West increased from 20 percent of total trade in 1960 to 35.5 percent in 1974. The trend is impressive and so is the increase in the deficit: 17 billion dollars in 1973, 22.3 billion in 1974, 32-35 billion for 1975.[29]

It is well known what led Eastern European countries to increase trade with the West after 1960: the need to shift from extensive to intensive development, and difficulties in producing the technology which, consequently, had to be bought from the West. This has given rise to a form of exchange typical of underdeveloped countries: Comecon members sell low technology goods at low prices and purchase high technology goods at high prices (unequal exchange).[30] Furthermore, Eastern European countries come to experience the repercussions on their economies of the current world capitalist crisis: the monetary and the oil crisis. Until now, faced with the sharp increases in world prices, Eastern European planners sought to prevent the burden from falling on their consumers (or falling as little as possible, as in the case of Poland and Hungary). But the 1976 events in Poland indicate that a turning point now is approaching. If prices of imported goods continue to rise and there are no increases in prices, the increased production costs of these goods (for the goods and technology purchased from the West affect production costs) will have to be borne by someone. This someone will have to be the economy as a whole, i.e., its ability to maintain a certain rhythm of accumulation and development.

Sooner or later, the following alternatives will have to be confronted: either trade with the West is reduced by cutting back on the already low level of technology of Eastern European economies; or else current levels of trade with the West are upheld. In the latter case, however, consumers will at some point have to face the costs, i.e., increased prices and a depression of the already low levels of consumption.

Today the situation is more intricate and contradictory than in the early 1960s. To see how these countries can solve these problems, it is important to

28. Cf. Wilczynski, *op.cit.*, pp. 205-209. Cf. also Piettre, *op.cit.*, p. 75. When the Warsaw government threatened to nationalize land in 1975, the peasants killed their pigs with the result that meat had to be imported. It is easy to imagine the benefits of this on the declining Polish trade balance. Cf. Argout, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

29. Piettre, *op.cit.*, pp. 146-149.

30. As for Czechoslovakia, see J. Goldmann, "L'Economia Cecoslovacca negli Anni 1973 a 1974," in *Quaderni Cases*, 1974, Nos. 7-9, p. 267. More generally, as for all of the Eastern European countries, see P. Brera, "I Problemi Economici della Mitteleuropa Comunista," in *Mondoperaio*, No. 9 (1978), pp. 111ff.

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analyze carefully the Soviet economy, which is the guide and pivot of Eastern European countries. Its relations with them can be considered similar to those of the United States with respect to other Western countries. In both the Soviet Union and the United States, the characteristics of the two systems are carried to their extremes, so that general observations concerning the Soviet Union can be held valid for other Eastern European countries as well.

*Failure of the Ninth Soviet Five-Year Plan*

A few years ago, I argued that the eighth five-year plan, despite having achieved its formal objective of increasing global income, had in fact failed. The most important objectives of the plan — a reduction of the unbalanced relation between the A and B sectors of industry, recovery of that sick old lady of the Soviet economy (agriculture), increase of qualitative and quantitative labor productivity — had not been achieved. The Soviet economy had increased global income mostly through traditional methods, by mobilizing the last available resources for extensive economic development. Unless the Soviet economy managed to make that leap toward intensive development, which it could not, there would be problems.[31]

Thus, the ninth plan was bound to fail. This judgment was borne out by subsequent events. Consider global income which, according to the ninth plan, should have increased by 37 to 40 percent. Bernocchi mentions an increase of 36 percent, the Kosygin report for the 25th Party Congress mentions an increase of 34 percent, the final document approved by that congress mentions an increase of 28 percent, and this is the final official figure also endorsed by Chacaturov, one of the leading contemporary Soviet economists.[32] Therefore only about 70 percent of the global objective was achieved, and in the history of the Soviet economy this represents an unprecedented disaster. In addition to this drastic economic slowdown, there was a general failure of the most important partial index. Industrial production increased 43 percent against the predicted 42 to 46 percent. But the figure marks only an apparent success. The plan's main objective was not just an overall increase of industrial production, but a change in the relation between the A and B sectors. The first sector was to have increased by 41 to 45 percent and the second by 44 to 48 percent. But consumer goods increased by only 37 percent, so that the imbalance between the A and B sectors grew rather than decreased. Chacaturov points out that in 1968 production in the A sector reached a record 74.4 percent of total industrial production, in 1971 it decreased to 73.4 percent, but in 1973 it went back to 74 percent, and the situation worsened in the last two years of the plan. Thus, in 1975 the A sector grew 4.9 percent and the B sector only 2.7 percent — the lowest percentage of

31. Cf. A. Carlo, "Il Nuovo Piano Quinquinnale Sovietico" in *Giovane Critica*, No. 28, pp. 47ff.

32. Cf. P. Bernocchi, *Le "Riforme" in URSS* (Rome, 1977), p. 80; A.N. Kossyghin, *Les Grandes Options de l'Economie Nationale de L'URSS pour 1976-1980* (Moscow, 1976), p. 14; *Documents et Résolutions. Le XXVme Congrès du Parti Communiste de l'Union Sovietique* (Moscow, 1976), p. 21; and T.S. Chacaturov, *op.cit.*, p. 113.

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the post-war period.[33]

The failure of the agricultural sector was even more drastic: a 13 percent increase over five years against the 15.7 percent to 17.7 percent that had been predicted. In industry, labor productivity grew 34 percent against the 36 to 40 percent predicted, in agriculture, 22 percent against 37-40, and in construction, 29 percent against the goal of 36 to 40 percent. Thus, the 25th Congress' claim that all the goals of the ninth plan had been achieved is not to be taken too seriously. The situation with income and living standards was not much better. Blue- and white-collar workers' salaries increased by 20 percent (20 to 22 percent predicted), while the income of the Kolkhoz workers grew only 25 percent against the 30 to 35 percent predictions. But in real terms, the objectives were missed completely. In fact, what is the use of speaking of increases in income if there are no goods worth buying? The objectives were not reached precisely in the light industry and agricultural sectors, so that the wage increases are largely artificial. Soviet workers continue to save, despite having a fairly low wage and despite demands for better consumer goods and services. In 1973, net hourly wages plus social costs were 0.95 dollars in the Soviet Union, 1.85in Great Britain, 1.90 in France, 2.52 in West Germany, 3.41 in the United States. Average wages predicted for 1980 were 170 rubles per month, which, even at the unrealistically inflated official exchange rate of the ruble in the mid-1970s (roughly 0.75 dollars per ruble) would still be very low in Western terms. Despite this, Soviet workers, who buy on the black market whenever they can, still save, and only recently, a mere 61.6 percent of national income was spent on personal consumption — a figure comparable to the ultra-Calvinist Japan of the 1930s.[34]

Thus, all the old problems of the Soviet economy remain and the failure of the ninth five-year plan is clearly their result. Elsewhere, I have shown how these dysfunctions are the backbone and not a malignant outgrowth of the very system.[35] In the following, this thesis will be updated in light of new information concerning Soviet society.

### *The Tightening Technological Bottleneck*

The technological backwardness of the Soviet economy is evidenced by the

33. T.S. Chacaturov, *op.cit.*, pp. 205, 208 and 145.

34. Cf. Piettre, *op.cit.*, p. 105; *El Bienstar del Pueblo* (Moscow, 1976), p. 8; and Chacaturov, *op.cit.*, pp. 110-122. Concerning Japan, see A. Maddinson, *Lo Sviluppo Economico in Giappone e nell'URSS* (Naples, 1972), p. 69. One crucial indicator here is the excessive accumulation of unsold supplies. They amounted to the equivalent of 1.6 billion rubles in 1940 (9.3 percent of goods in circulation) but rose to 42 billion (22 percent of goods in circulation) in 1973. This is due to the low quality of the products, or to the fact that they do not satisfy Soviet consumers who chose to save (savings bank deposits rose from 0.7 billion rubles in 1940 to 19.9 in 1960, to 46.6 billion in 1970 to 68.7 billion in 1973). In 1971-72, half of Soviet-made products did not meet standard requirements, and about 3.4 billion rubles worth of products from the textile and clothing industries remained unsold because of poor quality, while only 0.6 percent of light industry products obtained approval from a particular quality brand. No less deficient is the housing situation where, despite enormous efforts, Soviet citizens in 1973 had a per capital area of 11.8 square meters, less than double (6.3 square meters) that of 60 years earlier (1913). Cf. also S. Fagiolo, *I Gruppi di Pressione in URSS* (Bari, 1977), pp. 190-201.

35. A. Carlo, "The Socio-Economic Nature of the USSR," *Telos*, No. 21 (Fall 1977).

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low production of computers in Comecon countries. The Soviet situation in this area is notoriously bad.[36] At any rate, Western computers that are sold to Eastern European countries are usually less advanced models. Nor are these the only indications of the Russians' technological backwardness. Thus, Chacaturov writes, "The prescribed average lifetime of machinery throughout industry is 17 years, in the energy sector 29 years, in steel 19 years, in the chemical industry 17 years, engineering 16 years, in light industry 19 years. In practice, the actual working life is considerably higher than the prescribed norm.... The depreciation of these important types of machinery has a negative effect on production. All this shows the need to increase considerably the development of machinery in order to replace worn-out models with new ones and to bring the average life of machines throughout industry to a period of nine to ten years.... In the United States, the average life of all tools was 10.1 years in 1968, compared to 17.1 years in 1940. The replacement age of just machinery was 6.2 years (compared to 9.6), that of buildings and installations 14.3 years compared to 20.5 years in 1940."[37]

But if such is the case, why have the Russians been able to keep pace with the West in weapons and missiles, and why has this technology been limited to the military-space industries? The question is relevant because, in the West, discoveries in military technology readily trickle down to civilian production. What prevents in the Soviet Union discoveries in the military sector from entering the civilian sector? And why does the civilian sector not develop its own advanced technology independent of the military-space sector?

The first question is usually answered with reference to the priority of the military-space sector.[38] Although this might be true, the answer describes rather than explains the issue. For at least 15 years, the Soviet leaders have insisted obsessively on the need for a technological renewal of the system. Undoubtedly, efforts to reconstitute the technological base on a global level are a high priority based on objective needs. Yet, primary technology remains blocked within the military-space sector.

The solution to this quandary is both extremely simple and extremely complex. The insoluble part of the problem is that of costs. Several years of detailed study have shown that the Soviet military and space industries are no different from civilian ones in the sense that they are subject to the same waste and dysfunctions — only that, for political reasons, an exorbitant quantity of resources per unit of production are assigned to this sector. Therefore, it can develop, through a process of trial and error, within wider margins than the sectors of civilian industry, and this allows the Soviet military-space complex to obtain considerable qualitative results but with enormous production costs

36. Cf. J. Slama and H. Vogel, in *Forschungsbericht* (Munich, 1975), p. 144, for comparative data. Recently, the sale of a U.S. computer to China almost brought about a diplomatic incident. In order to appease the Russians, the U.S. had to sell the same computer to them. Cf. B. Garrett, "A Evoluçao das Relaçoes emtre os Estados Unidas e a China," in *O Mundo Diplomatico,* No. 1 (1977), p. 10.

37. Chacaturov, *op.cit.,* pp. 108-109.

38. Cf. Fagiolo, *op.cit.,* pp. 120ff; and D. Holloway, "Technology and Political Decision in Soviet Armaments Policy," *Journal of Peace Research,* No. 11 (1974, pp. 265-270.

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that cannot be borne by all of industry.[39] These costs force Soviet leaders to assign priority to the arms industry — a choice that is not a free one, but is necessitated by the system's contradictions. The Soviet leaders have an objective interest in extending military technology to the rest of the economy, but they come up against the problem of costs which forces them to be selective and privilege the military-space sector. This privileging is not the result of choice, but of a contradictory restraint which the Soviet ruling class would like to overcome but cannot. The facts to support such a thesis are plentiful. Thus, Holloway has pointed out that Russian military planning could not be so perfect if in 1940 the production plan for ammunition for certain kinds of artillery was fulfilled by 21.5 percent (37 millimeter shells) and by 34.8 percent (85 millimeter shells). More recently, plans for construction of certain nuclear submarines were subject to the normal lengthy delays in execution typical of Soviet planning, and consequently the projects became obsolete one after the other before the units were produced. That costs were enormous was stated by Khrushchev himself who, in 1963, publicly declared (in one of his typical outbursts) that praises to technological development in the arms industry were due to the fact that production costs were left secret; if these costs were revealed, there would have been much less enthusiasm. After Khrushchev's fall, many others have followed the same line. Clearly, the problem of rationalizing the arms industry (reducing its enormous costs) remains.[40]

Thus, military technology cannot be transferred to the civil sector because it costs too much and the Soviet economy as a whole, which already has extremely high costs, cannot bear its extension. Therefore, the civilian sector must find independent ways to develop its own technology, and here a second problem arises. In the past, it was assumed that repressive Stalinist planning prevented any innovation at the plant level. To be innovative there has to be a certain degree of autonomy in the use of labor power, which was missing during the Stalinist period.[41] There must also be a certain amount of risk-taking, which managers, legally bound to the fulfillment of the plan (under penalty of social degradation) were not prepared to take and thus sought easier solutions. With the reforms, things should have changed, but they did not. According to Berliner and others, the incentives spelled out by the 1965

39. A few years ago, I was speaking about comparative levels of achievement in computer technology in the Soviet Union and in the West with a well-known expert in this area, well versed in the status of scientific research in both the United States and the Soviet Union. He told me that the Soviets were clamoring for Western-made computers, but that he himself had visited a center for scientific research in the Soviet Union that was furnished with Russian computers equal to the best available in the West. I was surprised and, almost instinctively, I put forward a hypothetical explanation. "Let's say," I said, "that for every high quality computer the Russians can get to work, there are nine that do not work because of assembling deficiencies, so that there is an enormous waste of labor power and raw materials that cuts off the development of the industry and forces it to purchase that technology from abroad." The scientist burst out laughing and told me that he had also come to this conclusion.

40. Cf. Holloway, *op.cit.*, pp. 166-178.

41. Cf. J.S. Berliner, *The Innovation Decision in Soviet Industry* (Cambridge and London, 1976), pp. 156-157; and Wilczynski, *op.cit.*, pp. 147-150.

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reform were not enough to balance out the risks. Yet, although administered prices were rigid and severely limited the managers' autonomy, managers could still make up the cost of innovation by increasing labor productivity through automation.[42]

The Soviet managers' inability to innovate can be explained in terms of the contradictions of the 1965 reform. In 1965, managers were empowered to dismiss workers but not to control the wage fund which, despite some margins, was fixed by the plan. Unlike in the capitalist system, where technological innovations help increase profits by reducing labor costs, the absurdity of the 1965 reform was that it recognized the means (firing workers) but not the ends (a reduction of labor costs and therefore of the wage fund) so that the reform turned out to be ineffective. The risks of innovation were still too high because the crude profit principle had not been followed to the end. It makes no sense to fire unnecesssary workers if the wage fund cannot be reduced.[43] What happens, then, is that Soviet managers avoid firing workers even when they could. The reason is simple: unable to reduce the wage fund, they are better off maintaining control over a work force that could be useful in the future.[44]

The question that arises here is why were these reforms passed in such a counterproductive manner. As I have already indicated elsewhere, the reforms were the result of a compromise between two conflicting classes: the bureaucracy and the technocracy.[45] Russian bureaucrats could not grant any

42. Berliner, *op.cit.*, pp. 517-518 and pp. 368ff.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 158. Berliner points out that within the logic of the reform, savings in wages was meant as an incentive to employ labor-saving techniques. Yet, the savings in wages was not translated in a reduction of costs but had to be re-used as wages (even if among a smaller number of workers).

44. The aversion to firing workers is not due to legal or moral constraints, as Berliner mistaken maintains (*ibid.*, pp. 158-159), because today it is legal to fire workers. On this point, see M. Holubenko, "The Soviet Working Class," *Critique*, No. 4, pp. 5ff, who describes the situation of exploitation and of alienation of the Soviet working class. Such a system is not very sensitive to moral values (*sic*).

45. See Carlo, "The Socio-Economic Nature of the USSR," *op.cit.* Hegedus (*op.cit.*, pp. 17ff) mentions a conflict between two strata of the bureaucracy: the central political bureaucracy and the managers of enterprises. Cf. also A. Hegedus, *Socialism and Bureaucracy* (London, 1976). But it is not a conflict between two strata of the same class. Rather, it involves two different classes struggling for power. A similar argument is developed by J. Eggert, "Die Sowjetgesellschaft — eine sozialistische Gesellschaft?" in *Links*, No. 45, Part I, pp. 8-10; part II, No. 46, pp. 22-23; part III, No. 47, pp. 14-19. Cf. also E. Jahn, *Kommunismus und was dann?* (Hamburg, 1974), pp. 81-88. Eggert denies that the contradiction between the bureaucracy and the technocracy is not as sharp as I argue. Although there are blurred lines between the two camps, it is clear that the reforms demanded by the most pugnacious managers seek a shift of power from the central plan to the management of the enterprises, i.e., an expropriation of the bureaucracy in favor of the technocracy. Of course, the demarcation lines between bureaucrats and technocrats are not all that clear. Thus, the fact that managers in the mining industry make twice as much as those in light industry (cf. Fagiolo, *op.cit.*, p. 177) could make them more conservative. Furthermore, on the local level, there is often an alliance between local bureaucrats and managers against the central bureaucracy since, very often, local political interests coincide with those of local enterprises. This does not alter the fact that the reforms have a precise class meaning since they tend to shift economic power from the central bureaucracy to the managers. For critiques of Eggert, see U. Schieniederler, "Zur Analyse von Uebergangsgesellschaft, Kritik an Johannan Eggrt 'Die Sowjetgesellschaft,' " in *Links*, No. 49, pp. 15-18; and E. Altvater, "Der socialistische Nationalstaat. Etatische Gesellschaft oder Uebergangserscheinung," in *Links*, No. 50, pp. 15-17.

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more concessions than those envisioned by the reforms without losing control over the economy, i.e., without seeing their power shift to managers. In fact, recognition of wage flexibility meant allowing the wage fund to be determined by the law of supply and demand. But the size of the wage fund determines demand and consumption. Thus, demand and consumption would no longer be determined by the plan, but by market laws similar to those of the capitalist market. But, then, demand and consumption would also influence production. If demand and consumption are determined by the market, production would have to follow. At this point, the plan becomes unnecessary and the economy is guided by the market and no longer by the plan, which would become subaltern to the market (as in the West), i.e., subaltern to productive units operating independently on the market. This would mean a restoration of capitalism with a transfer of power over production from the central political bureaucracy to the technocrats, as has happened in Yugoslavia.[46] This, however, would be impossible within the logic of the collective bureaucratic system. It would mean the overturning of the system. Thus, it is clear why the Soviet bureaucracy, much stronger than that of Tito in the mid-1960s, should not give up the fundamental levers of power, and why reforms in the Soviet Union take on such a limited and compromising character, which leave unchallenged the central levers of power. The trouble is that a partial capitalism in a framework dominated by the collective bureaucratic principles of the Soviet plan cannot work, so reforms ended up being rapidly aborted.

It is interesting to see what was said about these issues during the Soviet conference of May 1968. At that time, the first signs of unemployment were beginning to appear. But even during that relatively euphoric conference, the person responsible for the plan (Bailakov) had to point out that factories were being asked to provide the old production indices which had been formally abolished by the 1965 reforms.[47] During the same conference, a Soviet manager complained that he had supervised the introduction of new technology in his factory, which had only resulted in his having increases in costs that no one would reimburse him for. This means that a reduction in costs, without changing the volume of wages, is not possible. Thus, after some initial enthusiasm, managers do not use, or do so only rarely, their power to fire workers.

It is unclear whether after 1968 the old performance figures were still being required, but Soviet economic writings record this as a normal procedure. Kosta notes that, in 1970, Russian plants were being asked to provide 14 performance figures (against the 8 required by the reforms). Among these 14, however, he does not include the famous *val* (gross production index), which still exists as a fact, even though formally abolished.[48] According to this *val*, the most vital activity is production. Sales are considered secondary. Thus,

46. Cf. A. Carlo, "Capitalism and Crisis in Yugoslavia," *Telos*, No. 36 (Winter 1977-78).
47. Cf. E. Sicco, "A che Punto è la Riforma Economica in USSR," in *Quaderni Piacentini*, No. 38, pp. 206-207.
48. Kosta, *op.cit.*, p. 126.

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Soviet factories tend to produce unsaleable rejects in order to meet production quotas. The 1965 reforms sought to emphasize sales, but Soviet plants continued to produce a growing mass of unsaleable and unsold rejects because they kept emphasizing production: the *val* still dominates Soviet production. Unable to use modern technology, Soviet plants continued to use labor-intensive techniques that resulted in unusable — hence, unsaleable — low-quality products. The reforms' failure caused the *de facto* survival of the *val* and of other indices related to it.

*The Problem of Raw Materials and the Law of Increasing Waste*

Low technology and lack of flexibility in the Soviet system leads to serious problems of waste.[49] This is a matter of increasing concern for Soviet planners.[50] Here it is important to ask whether the waste of raw materials is a growing trend, what are its causes, and whether they can be overcome within the present system. An old study by an American economist dealing with the pre-reform period confirms that the use of raw materials per unit of production in the Soviet Union increased between 1940 and the 1960s.[51] The Soviets admit the seriousness of the problem but maintain that the general trend is toward a reduction of costs and of waste. Thus, Chacaturov maintains that, according to the Soviet statistics bureau, the cost per unit of commercial product decreased by an average of 0.85 kopeks a year during the period between 1966 and 1973, which amounts to a global reduction of costs of 3.1 billion rubles a year.[52] These figures, however, are suspect. First of all,

49. Chacaturov writes: "The extraction of ores of ever decreasing quality and a growing need to reach increasingly deeper strata raises the capital intensity of the mining sector. A decrease in the intensity of capital and mining costs is made possible by developing strip-mining for up to 75 to 80 percent for all minerals. It is also necessary to reduce the loss of raw materials during the process of extraction. For example, more oil remains underground than is pumped up, 40 to 50 percent of solid minerals extracted is left in the ground, and in the forests up to one third of the wood used in the economy is left as waste.... Although the consumption of metal in the engineering industries has decreased considerably in the last 10 years, it is still very high. It is 20 to 25 percent higher than in the United States, where in the post-war years the consumption of aluminum and plastics underwent a rapid increase.... One of the reasons for the high consumption of metals is the high waste. Wasted metals in the machine industry run as high as 8 million tons per year, and waste from all industries runs as high as 15 million tons.... Losses of petroleum gas are also very high. For every ton of oil extracted, there is 150 to 200 cubic meters of gas containing gasoline, propane, butane and after their removal, methane. However, a considerable part of this gas is dispersed and another part is burned during extraction.... We must not allow losses of potatoes, vegetables and fruit during harvesting, transportation, canning and storage. There have been cases in both the Eastern and Baltic regions where, because of the low handling capacity of the fish processing factories, the lack of refrigeration facilities and sometimes because of inefficient organization, fishing boats cannot be unloaded and eventually the catch becomes second or third rate fish or even turned into fish flour, animal feed and fertilizer.... The causes of losses in agriculture and food products are many. One of them is the lack of coordination between the size of warehouses and their facilities, as well as between the productive capacity of the processing industries and agricultural production." Cf. Chacaturov, *op.cit.*, pp. 81, 152, 181, and 187.

50. Cf. L.I. Breznev and A.N. Kossyghin, *Rapporti al XXIII Congresso del PCUS* (Rome, 1966), p. 126; A.N. Kossyghin, *Il Piano Quinquennale*, *op.cit.*, p. 29; *Documents et Résolutions, Le XXV Congrès*, *op.cit.*, p. 35; and Wilczynski, *Technology*, *op.cit.*, p. 199.

51. Quoted in Wilczynski, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

52. Chacaturov, *op.cit.*, pp. 272-273.

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the production costs regard only commercial goods, and not those in the military arms industry. Secondly, what is covered is commercial production introduced into commercial circulation. Now, part of this production remains unsold because it is unacceptable to the Soviet consumer. As already indicated, in 1972 alone 3.4 billion rubles' worth of textile products were left unsold — a figure which by itself is more than sufficient to eliminate the yearly reduction in costs provided by the Russian statistics bureau. The problem, however, goes well beyond the textile industry. Furthermore, as can be seen from other figures provided by Chacaturov himself for the 1940-73 period, the problem turns out to be growing both in an absolute and relative sense with respect to the Stalinist period.

Consider the question of electric power waste. Chacaturov notes that between 1913 and 1973, industrial production increased 113 times, and the use of electricity in industry, 373 times. These figures indicate an enormous waste, and Chacaturov explains it by pointing out that Russian industry in 1913 was undeveloped so that the point of departure is deceptive.[53] Yet, although industry at the time of the czar was not geographically developed, it was extremely concentrated and advanced. Chacaturov gives himself away when he says that during the 1965-73 period industrial production grew 86 percent and the consumption of electricity 68 percent. For agriculture, however, the ratio was a disaster: 38 percent against 176 percent. The same goes for transportation (52 percent versus 75 percent) so that he cannot deny that average electricity consumption per unit of product "grew a little." This is very important. One of the reforms' objectives was to reduce waste of social wealth. In the basic sector of electric power, this objective failed and average consumption per unit "grew a little." Given the size of the Soviet economy, this is an enormous waste.

One last figure further confirms that waste is on the increase even after the reforms: the rise in the number of unfinished plants or, rather, finished but with considerable delays with respect to the plan's objectives. This too is a waste of raw materials (delay in the use of materials used in the plant's production) and of social wealth in general. Here are Chacaturov's figures. "In the execution of the investment plan, a number of sectors showed considerable delay in beginning to operate their productive units. For example, in the eighth five-year plan, coal mining plants began to operate at 61 percent of the plan's objective, steel plants at 59 percent, chemical fiber plants at 35 percent, cement plants at 65 percent. Delays in starting the operation of new productive units also continued between 1971 and 1973, especially in the sectors of ferrous metals, iron sheeting, cardboard, etc. About 25 percent of the major works included in the plan did not begin to operate within the time limit and were shifted to the following year. This delay in the use of productive units led to an increase in the number of unfinished construction works. In 1960, unfinished construction in relation to the annual volume of investments was 60 percent, in 1965, 69 percent, in 1970, 73

53. *Ibid.*, p. 178.

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percent, in 1971, 76 percent, and in 1972, 77 percent. Furthermore, for works centrally financed, this percentage (without calculating machinery not included in the construction's estimated costs) were 86, 89, 98, and more than 100 percent for the same respective years. Within the individual industrial sectors, the percentage of unfinished construction was particularly high for electrical power, coal, steel, chemical, and petrochemical industries. *In the last few years, there has been an increase of unfinished works in all sectors....* The large number of unfinished works leads to heavy economic losses. If we place the value of unfinished works in the productive sector at 50 billion rubles, and if we consider that only half of this sum falls within the norm, this means that 25 billion rubles have been uselessly frozen. If these means are translated into fixed funds of completed production, with a return of 60 kopeks to the ruble, it amounts to 15 billion rubles of net production."[54]

Clearly, there is an enormous waste and a tendency for this waste to grow in this sector also. As the economy gradually expands, there is a tendency for waste to increase uncontrollably. Difficulty in controlling everything from the center increases with the increase of the system's complexity and size, so that the centrifugal and dysfunctional tendencies inside individual plants are given free play. For this reason, if the system grows, so does waste. This type of dysfunction is internal to the system and it is impossible to eliminate. The system is unable to impose a standard of quality that firms can accept, nor is it able to coordinate closely linked operations such as agricultural production, storing and processing. The ultracentralized plan can work during the initial phases of development. Once this phase is over, tensions increase and cease to be costs of development to become insurmountable obstacles to it. Given the level of growth and complexity of the Soviet economy today, the ultracentralized plan is uncontrollable and explosive. The law of increasing waste is an expression of this growing lack of control from the center of the Soviet economy.

*Low Labor Productivity. The Scekino and Saratov Methods*

The gap between labor productivity in the Soviet Union and in the United States is a sore point in the Soviet economy. According to Chacaturov, the productivity of Soviet workers was 51 to 54 percent of American productivity in industry (1972-73), 65 and more in construction, 20 to 25 percent in agriculture over the five years between 1966 and 1970. Consider agriculture.[55] The Soviets mention a productivity figure of 20 to 25 percent of its U.S. equivalent. This figure is quite ambiguous: it is well known that on the issue of productivity, the Soviets have a poor record and therefore, giving them the

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 274-277.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 161. These calculations, however, are based on the official exchange rate of the ruble (one dollar roughly equivalent to .75 rubles). It is well-known that the various exchange rates fixed by Soviet authorities at different times have been over-estimated. The ruble is not included on Western currency markets and in the late 1950s two scholars, using a wide range of information, came to the conclusion that the ruble of that time was worth about 40 Italian lire, compared to the 62.50 of the official rate. Cf. S. D'Angelo and L. Paladini, *La Sfida di Krusciov* (Milan, 1960), pp. 65-75.

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maximum benefit of the doubt, it is safe to assume that when they say 20 to 25 percent, they really mean 20 percent.

So, in 1970, Soviet production in agriculture was about (maybe a little more) 10 percent lower than U.S.production, with the small difference that in the United States 3.5 million people work in this sector, while in the Soviet Union 29 million work there.[56] As there are no substantial differences in working hours, the Soviet Union has a larger surface of arable land, and calculations made on the basis of the official exchange rate of the ruble lead to an overestimation of 35 to 40 percent, it can be assumed that Soviet agricultural productivity is 12 to 13 percent of U.S. productivity (not 20 percent). The same applies to industry. Here, too, 3.5 to 4 points out of every 10 can be subtracted from the official percentage figures, which means that the 51 to 54 percent figure is really 33 to 35 — figures that coincide with Maddison's estimate of 1960, according to which Soviet productivity in industry was about a third of U.S. productivity and three fourths of that of other neo-capitalist countries. Since then, there was the 1961-64 crisis, which prompted the reforms, and then two failed five-year plans (the eighth and the ninth). It is not strange, therefore, that the gap remains more or less unchanged. More recently, a 1970 estimate by Cacace, a pro-Russian scholar, came up with the fact that, on the basis of several comparisons of similar Soviet and Italian industries, Soviet labor productivity in industry was 70 to 80 percent of Italian productivity, or three fourths. Furthermore, Cacace reported that the technological level of the factories he visited was adequate, so that the difference in productivity between the Soviet Union and Italy was to be attributed more to bad organization and slow work rhythms than to old technology. "But," says Cacace, "even considering these deficiencies, one gets the impression that the Soviets are fast regaining ground."[57]

This is indicative. The Soviets readily admit that their factories' equipment is obsolete and Cacace's evaluation as not based on an average factory but on privileged points of production, which may lead one to think that the situation of 1960-70 has worsened with respect to Maddison's estimate. At any rate, by examining official figures and documented analyses, nothing can be said to have changed between 1960 and mid-1970s regarding the East-West gap in productivity within the basic industrial and agricultural sectors.

Although such a wide difference has already been accounted for in terms of the technological component of production, there is also the lingering problem of the lack of workers' commitment. The following pages will analyze the failure of two attempts by the Russians to increase labor productivity both qualitatively and quantitatively, i.e., the Scekino and the Saratov methods.

*The Scekino Method.* This method is based on the old carrot-and-stick principle. A manager can fire a lazy worker by distributing the wage fund among a smaller number of workers, thus providing an incentive to work

56. Cf. Wilczynski, *Technology, op.cit.*, p. 204.

57. Cf. N. Cacace, "Produttività e Organizzazione del Lavoro in URSS," in *Problemi del Socialismo*, second series, No. 49, pp. 838ff.

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more and better. There has been a great debate in the Soviet press over Scekino's method, although only factories with a total of 1.1 percent of gross production actually use it.[58] If so, why has there been so much propagandistic clamor and so little implementation in practice? The truth of the matter is that the Scekino method can work only in limited and unusual situations. The threat of being fired is not a serious one in a situation where, although the number of workers has increased by 10 million between 1971 and 1973, there is a continuous excess of labor demand over supply.[59] The problem is so serious that the Soviet law includes ridiculous statutes somewhat similar to fascist laws glorifying female fertility. Thus, women who have 10 children earn the title of "heroic mother," while those who have from five to nine must content themselves with the order of "glorious motherhood" and with the "Maternity Medal."[60] This ridiculous glorification of women as incubators is related to the wide gap between the supply and demand for labor power. The Soviet Union is one of the few countries that is not troubled by demographic increases because of the extensive nature of Russian development. Thus, firing is not a real threat. Workers are more and more precious precisely because, ironcially, they produce little. As for the carrot of higher wages, it is not very effective when Soviet industry produces few consumer goods, and of an extremely low quality, forcing Russian workers into consumer boycotts and constrained saving.[61]

*The Saratov Method.* Here, too, it is a matter of the carrot and the stick. Workers who produce sub-quality products are morally reprimanded and called before their fellow workers to excuse themselves. If, on the other hand, they work well, they receive a wage incentive of 10 percent. After six months

58. Cf. Fagiolo, *op.cit.*, p. 186. Allegedly, in 1973 it involved only 700 enterprises.

59. Cf. *El Bienstar del Puebo, op.cit.*, p. 7.

60. In the mid-1970s, in the Soviet Union there were 183,000 heroic mothers, 3.5 million decorated with the order of "maternal glory" and 9.5 million had the Maternity Medal. This legislation recalls the grotesque efforts of Italian fascism, with the difference that, in the latter, the increase in population was meant essentially to create a surplus of labor power and hold wages down (in addition to wage imperial wars). In the Soviet Union, the problem is different. On the whole, wages are kept down, but there is a serious lack of labor due to the extensive nature of development. Thus, the rise in population is meant to fill this deficit. Recently, in the Soviet Union the problem has been intensified since, not withstanding the government's efforts, the results have not been too encouraging. There is a little rise in population and one marriage in three fails. Cf. K.S. Karol, "Non ï Femminismo, la Chiamano Malattia Demografica, ï la Crisi della Famiglia e della Coppia," in *Manifesto*, September 4, 1978, p. 5. The cause of this crisis is the women's refusal to perform a double duty: as a worker and as a housewife — only one of which is paid. The problem could be resolved with a massive dosage of social investments which would free Soviet women of a substantial part of their housework functions. The trouble, however, is that these social investments are unproductive and at a time when planners must confront the problem of falling productivity, it is difficult to emphasize investments of this type.

61. Cf. G. Ortona and F. Cugno, in *Momenti e Problemi di Storia dell'URSS* (Rome, 1978), p. 230. They argue that Russian workers themselves are opposed to an increase in the production of consumer goods since this would mean an increase in their working load. This is a totally unacceptable explanation: the black market and the refusal to buy terrible consumer goods show that workers-consumers do not readily accept the system's delivery of consumer goods. Nor is it correct to claim that Russian workers are unwilling to work more if that is to their advantage. The case of Kolkhoz workers — who are not biologically different from other workers — who do not spare their energies when it comes to their own plots, is indicative.

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of error-free work, they achieve a special status and an increase of 15 percent that can become 25 percent if workers are able to go above the fixed production norm by at least 10 percent without errors.[62] The same problems arise here as arose in the Scekino method: moral reprimands are useless in an antagonistic society in which the working class is not integrated but alienated. The threat of firing is irrelevant, and wage increases are useless if money is difficult to spend because of a lack of satisfactory consumer goods. The Saratov method was used in plants comprising six million workers, or 18 to 19 percent of the Soviet working class, and the first experiments date back to 1964. The Soviet press again praised it, but results are not encouraging. The quality of Soviet production is pathetic. Beyond the propaganda, the previously mentioned contradictions remain. Furthermore, the Saratov method contains another limitation. To produce high quality goods, modern and efficient equipment is necessary. Soviet equipment is neither, so that to blame workers for producing rejects with machinery that is 15 to 30 years old is absurd. Thus, this approach could increase tension between workers and management — relations that are not entirely idyllic right now.[63] It is not surprising, therefore, that ten years after its inception, the Saratov method was being used only in factories employing about one fifth of the Russian working class.

*The Continuing Inefficiency of Soviet Agriculture.*

Except for the NEP period, relations between the Soviet state and the peasants have been of a non-capitalist variety. During the Stalinist phase, after enforced collectivization, exchange relations between the state and the Kolkhoz were only apparent exchange relations. The exploitation of agriculture was very different from industry-agriculture relations within capitalism. Thus, prices were often merely formal and far lower than production costs. The mercantile relation masked the bureaucratic appropriation within the sphere of choices of the collective bureaucratic plan. After Stalin, the exploitation decreased but did not disappear, and the reforms of agricultural prices in 1958 and 1965 meant to adjust them to production costs remained mostly on paper. Even after 1965 the gap between prices that the state paid the Kolhkozy and those it paid the free market remained enormous.[64]

62. On the Saratov method, see Wilczynski, *op.cit.*, pp. 160ff. He discusses also the Do-Ro method in Poland and other Eastern European countries. This method is a variation of the Saratov method, with the insertion of some elements derived from the American "zero defects system." The same criticism made of the Saratov method applies to its Do-Ro variation.

63. G. Meyer, in his "Zum Problemen der 'etatischen Burokratie" in der UdSSR," in *Links*, No. 53, pp. 18-20, has argued that, having overcome Stalinist deviations, a genuine industrial economic democracy has been realized in the USSR. Against this incredible claim, see J.M. Chauvier, "URSS: L'Ere du Management," in *Les Temps Modernes*, Nos. 349-350, pp. 202ff.; and J.M. Chauvier, "La Condizione Operaia in URSS," in *Il Sistema Sovietico, op.cit.*, pp. 65ff.; R. Di Leo, "Le Relazioni Industriali nei Paesi Socialisti," in *Il Mulino*, No. 243, pp. 27ff. The situation has not changed with the 1973 reforms, which have simply brought about a reorganization of existing power relations.

64. During the ninth five-year plan (1971-75), an authoritative Soviet journal stated that prices paid by the state to the Kolkhozy were sometimes lower than production costs. Cf. A.

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If prices were related to costs, the Kolkhozy would expand costs and reach a mercantilization of prices (real cost of production plus profit). Thus, the situation must not change and price must remain linked to the logic of the plan and not even attempt to relate to costs at the level of investments. Although agriculture did not become a priority sector, it did receive better treatment from Soviet planners. Between 1950 and 1970, fixed capital in agriculture grew 320 percent and during the 1970 to 74 period, almost as much was invested in agriculture as during the 1917-70 period. Agricultural investments increased: from 11.7 percent of the total in 1946-50, then went to 19.9 percent in 1971-75, although in 1973 agriculture produced only 15.7 percent of the gross social product. The tenth five-year plan sets aside 171.7 billion rubles for agricultural investments from a total sum of investments of 620 billion, i.e., 27 to 28 percent. In short, this is an enormous effort for a sector that produces little and in which production seems to be decreasing in the last few years.[65] This is one of the many contradictions of the Soviet economy. On the one hand, planners stroke the mule of Russian agriculture (investments), while on the other, they beat it (with prices). This is explained by the fact that to re-establish a mercantile mechanism of prices within the state-Kolkhoz relation might affect the rest of the Soviet system at a time when the demand for a mercantile price flexibility is the battle cry of the reformers who were far from completely defeated with the setting aside of the 1965 reforms.[66]

A mercantile system of prices presupposes production based on independent economic units acting independently of the plan, and that would mean the end of bureaucratic class power based precisely on the plan. It is understandable why the bureaucracy does not want to extend mercantile relations into the countryside, where they already exist as secondary but "bothersome" features in the form of the Kolkhoz private plots. Yet, the needs of Soviet society have increased and agriculture must produce more,

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Blasova, "Agricoltura: Prezzi di Ammasso e Redditività," in *Quaderni Cases*, No. 1 (1973), p. 74. This, however, was not a good enough reason for relating prices to costs — an indication that, still in the 1970s, the two were not related — because "In many regions of the country, by perfecting gross prices through their differentiation, means accepting the criteria of attributing to the relative tariff group the actual production cost of the type of agricultural production. In actual fact, the enterprises' costs for various types of agricultural production do not reflect the socially necessary costs and cannot be used as an objective indicator of the above-mentioned goals.... In today's system of costs, individual enterprises can have some unexpectedly high material costs, which will be absorbed by prices." *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

65. Cf. Piettre, *op.cit.*, pp. 70-71; Chacaturov, *op.cit.*, p. 233; and R. Rotenmundt, U. Schimiederer, and H. Becker-Panitz, *Entspannung, op.cit.*, p. 154, which provides a table for state investments in agriculture for the 1951-65 period. Cf. also J. Almaric, "URSS, un Certain Tassement," in *Le Monde, L'Année Economique, op.cit.*, p. 72; *Documents et Résolutions. Le XXV Congrès, op.cit.*, p. 90.

66. The Soviet specialized press has refueled the polemic concerning the nature of the plan whereby, according to some economists, it would have to have an indicative character and not be binding (which implies that the restored market would really guide the economy). This has triggered a sharp clarification on the part of orthodox economists concerning the binding nature of the plan. Cf. J. Belik, "Il Piano, Previsione o Direttiva," in *Quaderno Cases*, No. 7-8 (1973), pp. 617ff. Cf. also Belik, "Continua la Polemica sulla Funzione dell Piano," in *Quaderni Cases*, No. 9, p. 719.

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otherwise Soviet workers, deprived of adequate nourishment, may become even more aloof from work (absenteeism). Soviet workers (and citizens) cannot accept that the world's second industrial and military power is unable to provide a decent average standard of consumption, even in nutrition. Since, therefore, it is vital to produce more in agriculture, massive investments are made while not a millimeter is yielded in terms of introducing mercantile prices, i.e., the abandonment of the 1958 and 1965 reforms. Agriculture, however, refuses to develop and resists every injection of investments. This is because the Soviet agricultural system is affected not only by the general problems characteristic of the whole system, but also by particular ones specific to it. General problems include the low quality of investment goods that agriculture receives and bureaucratic incompetence. Thus, of the 2,762,200 tractors made in Russia between 1966 and 1976, because of their poor quality, only 676,000 were still in operation by the mid-1960s. As for incompetent bureaucracy, an inquiry by *Pravda* during one of the harvests of the ninth five-year plan disclosed that a farm had received 778 telephone orders from above, which confirmed, contradicted, and canceled one another.[67] More comnplex is the question of the specific dysfunctions in Russian agriculture. The enormous sacrifices required by the enforced collectivization of 1928-30 are well known.[68] The collapse of agricultural production and the rupture created between the state and the peasantry made Stalin seek a certain consensus among the peasants. At the 2nd Congress of the Assault Kolkhoz workers (1935), he personally attacked the ultra-bureaucratic tendencies.[69]

The result was the official recognition of Kolkhoz private plots: small, individually farmed areas inside the sea of collectivized agriculture. In this way, Kolkhoz workers slaved for miserable wages in the collective farm and made it to the end of the month with food grown on their own plots — some of which food was also sold in the Kolkhoz market. Stalin's plan could succeed only as long as agriculture remained the Cinderella of Soviet economy. But it is no longer acceptable that the Kolkhozy plots, which covered about 4.5 percent of cultivated land, were responsible for as much as a fifth of all agricultural production. The enormous investments in agriculture cannot

67. Cf. Levinson, *op.cit.*, p. 148.

68. Cf. R. Lorenz, *Sozialgeschichte der Sowietunion,* vol. I (Frankfurt, 1976), pp. 183ff.; G. Sokoloff, *L'Economie Obéissante, op.cit.*, pp. 144ff.; G. Boffa, *Storia dell'Unione Sovietica* (Milan, 1976), pp. 398ff.; and U. Wolter, *Origini della Stalinismo* (Rome, 1977), pp. 155ff.

69. Presenting a "liberal" front, Stalin said, "Some think that it is not possible to allow a Kolkhoz worker to own a cow; others that he should not own a pig. In either case you want to strangle the Kolkhoz worker. This is a wrong way of acting.... If there is still not abundant production in agricultural collectives and if you are unable to provide the Kolkhozy workers and their families all they need, the collectives cannot hope to satisfy both collective and individual needs. It is better to be frank and to say here is the sphere of collective activity and here is the sphere of individual activity. It is better to start from this principle. We have, on the one hand, the collective farm, vast and determining, which is necessary for satisfying collective needs, and on the other hand, the small individual plot to satisfy the personal needs of Kolkhoz workers." Quoted in S.N. Prokopovic, *Storia Economica dell'URSS* (Bari, 1957), p. 205. On the problems of Soviet collectivization, see F. Bettanin, *La Collettivazione delle Campagne in URSS* (Rome, 1978).

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work if Kolkhozy workers spend their best energies in their private plots and whiled away their time on the collective farms.

Two solutions are possible: a real Kolkhoz democracy able to integrate the peasants into the management of the economy for real collective ends — an impossible solution because it runs counter to the interests of the dominant social group in the Soviet Union; or else a bureaucratic elimination of the private plots. This last solution is closest to the interests of the bureaucratic class, but the memory of the 1930s remains as a warning. The peasant cannot be pushed into collaboration by renewing the "orgies" of forced collectivization: that only turns the silent strike of the countryside into open revolt. Thus, a stalemate develops which makes the problem of labor productivity in agriculture more serious than in industry.

The political solution proposed by the Soviet ruling class was a promise of future higher standards of living in exchange for immediate increases in productivity. But Kolkhoz workers have no reason to trust those who have committed enormous crimes against them. They trust only what they can be sure of, i.e., the fact that working on their private plots is remunerative. Thus, peasants continue to work little and badly on the collective farms, while they work as much as possible in their own plots.[70]

*The (Unrealizable) Objectives of the 10th Five-Year Plan*

An analysis of the current five-year plan (the tenth) helps understand where the Soviet economy is heading. Soviet planners have decided to keep a low profile, generally keeping objectives within the range of results obtained by th the preceding plan, i.e., much below previous objectives. Income should grow by about 26 percent which, on an average, is below the results of the previous five years (28 percent). A qualitative change must be noted; industrial production is expected to grow by 35 to 39 percent in the following way — 38 to 42 percent in Sector A and 30 to 32 percent in sector B. The timid attempts to move toward consumerism with the eighth plan and the partial consumerist trend sought by the ninth plan have been abandoned. This is the key index of the tenth five-year plan, whose objective is not so much an increase in gross production as an increase in efficiency and quality.[71] This is not a return to a typical situation of the Stalinist phase of bureaucratic collectivism, when the forced development of the A sector aimed at achieving a high gross product. The age of spectacular growth has been over for some time, and it is now understood that it is impossible to survive for long with old and obsolete technology. Hence the change in strategy. Before increasing

70. The figures corroborate this beyond a doubt. Consider the huge fluctuations in agricultural labor productivity from year to year. There are years in which it grew 12, 17, and 19 percent over the preceding year, and years in which it grew 1 percent and 3 percent, and years in which it fell by 3, 4 and 7 percent. According to Chacaturov, these fluctuations are due to the weather. That means that the Russian peasant always works very little. After 50 years of global planning this is the result: to hope for success of the agricultural plan, the Russian government must light a candle to St. Cyril (the protector of the Slavs) and hope for good weather. Cf. Chacaturov, *op.cit.*, pp. 233-234.

71. Cf. M.A. Crosnier, "Le Dixème Plan Quinquennal Soviétique (1976-1980): le Quinquemant de l'Efficacité et de la Qualité," in *Le Courier des Pays de L'Est*, No. 204, pp. 12ff.

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consumption, the industrial (and the agricultural) apparatus has to be brought up to date, which explains the emphasis on the A sector of industry as well as the continuation of investments in agriculture. The real objective of the plan is not to extend the apparatus at any cost, but to modernize it, to eliminate dysfunctions and waste, and to improve quality.

Such an objective, however, requires a net increase in labor productivity, not in a quantitative but in a qualitative sense. But there seem to be no adequate means to overcome this old problem on the Soviet economy. Growth in the production of electronic equipment should be 60 to 70 percent in the five years, quite a bit less than the increase of 2.6 times predicted by the preceding plan. This objective seems quite modest in relation to the needs of the Soviet economy. In the 1960s, Comecon countries contributed slightly over 6 percent of the production of low-quality computers and a third of industrial production. In order to achieve a balanced relation (one third and one third) at these growth rates, it will take decades. Assuming that the Soviet plan succeeds, that Western production remains at a standstill, and that other Comecon countries set themselves similar objectives, the Soviet Union and the Comecon should have 10 to 11 percent of world production of computers in 1980. With present growth rates and assuming Western production remaining at a standstill, they will have to wait until after 2000 to achieve a balanced and competitive relation at the world level. This points to one thing: if the Soviets and their partners want to postpone the consumerist trend in order to modernize the system, with such production rates they will have to plan and put together at least five or six five-year plans. It is feasible to ask Soviet workers and consumers to tighten their belts until the year 2000 and beyond?

In a system such as the Soviet one, where demand for labor power outruns supply, workers' collaboration is indispensable for improving the quality of goods and therefore the level of efficiency and technology. But, given the fact that mass layoffs are not a real threat, workers' cooperation can be obtained only by increasing their standards of living, i.e., by increasing the production of consumer goods, which the tenth plan does not do. This generates a vicious circle: in order to increase quality and technology, what is needed is workers' collaboration as well as high investments in the A sector of industry (thus, sacrificing consumer goods). But this sacrifice conflicts with the need to win the cooperation of Soviet workers. The tenth plan does not break this vicious circle and merely states that there is a need to increase discipline in the workplace and to somehow involve the working class in a management.[72] But the Soviet system is an organically antagonistic one and, as such, cannot tolerate organs of workers' democracy. These exist officially (and have existed in the past) but they obviously do not work. As for increase in income, given the situation of Russian consumers, this has been very small: 20 to 22 percent in five years. These are the modest results obtained by the preceding plan, and were not meaningful since the growth in the B sector of industry did not

72. Cf. *Documents et Résolutions. Le XXV Conglrès, op.cit.*, pp. 33 and 38.

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reach the 10 points above the old figure. According to the current tenth plan, the B sector will not even increase by 37 percent (as in 1971-75), but by 30 to 32 percent, while even construction, which includes the bothersome housing problem, seems headed toward an abrupt halt: construction activity will increase by only 14 percent — far below both the increase in income and the old figure foreseen by the preceding 1971-75 plan (37.6 percent).[73] Within this context, it is not clear why Soviet workers should change their old attitudes of absenteeism and non-collaboration.

The same is true for agriculture. The predicted increase in productivity is low (14 to 17 percent) and is based on huge investments. As with industry, the real goal is a qualitative improvement in agricultural structures: building a modern agricultural system not subject to meteorological whims. The tenth plan, however, does not eliminate the previously mentioned problems and deals only with technical and productive objectives. But the issue is not how to establish new relations between industry and agriculture. If peasants continue to goof off in the collective farms and prefer to work only in their own plots, nothing will change.

These bottlenecks must be overcome, but the tenth plan does not say how and it is easy to see why. The Russian planners' task is further complicated by another recent factor: the need to increase employment levels in the non-productive sector.[74] Although far from the Western levels of parasitism in this sector, a new contradiction is developing here. Within capitalism, the increase in the non-productive service sector is the result of the trends described by Petty's law: at a certain point, because of the employment of capital-intensive and labor-saving technology, industry is unable to create jobs so that surplus labor power turns toward the non-productive sectors.[75] But in the Soviet Union, the use of intensive technology is well below Western standards. Thus, the transfer of some labor power to the non-productive sectors is not the result of the structural trends described by Petty's law, but of the fact that Soviet society, as a result of its expansion, has become much more complex than in the past, and therefore needs a growing administrative sector. If the Soviets had computers and other modern technology, the problem could be resolved. Since they do not, there is only the painful alternative of allocating part of the new labor force to non-productive jobs. This alternative is painful because it is made prior to and independently of

73. M.A. Crosnier, *op.cit.*, p. 14. On the serious problem of housing in Eastern Europe, cf. W. Ampel, M. Kalm, G. Munk, "Le Logement en Europe Oriental," in *Le Courrier des Pays de l'Est*, No. 224, pp. 3ff.

74. Cf. Chacaturov, *op.cit.*, p. 70.

75. On this cf. A. Carlo, *Il Capitalismo Impianificabile* (Rome, 1976), pp. 79ff. On Petty's law, see M. De Luca, *Gli Economisti Napoletani del Settecento e la Politica di Sviluppo* (Naples, n.d.), p. 33. Petty's law states that population passes from agriculture to industry and then from industry to the tertiary sector. At least the first shift has already taken place in the Soviet Union, since this part of Petty's law does not apply just to capitalist development but to any industrial development starting from an agricultural base. The specific applicability to capitalism of Petty's law is the second part. Therefore, very different phenomena such as the growth of the tertiary sector within capitalism and its growth (much slower) within bureaucratic collectivism cannot be explained in a similar way since they stem from quite different causes.

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the qualitative leap from extensive to intensive development, so that it leads to a further slowing down in development.

To conclude, the formal objectives of the tenth plan are fixed at the levels of the unsuccessful ninth plan, and are so modest that they may well be achieved. The real objective, however, is another: to improve efficiency. Because of the stated reasons, this objective is unrealizable.[76]

*Crisis in Capitalism and in Bureaucratic Collectivism*

Clearly, the Soviet economy is in crisis. But what does this mean within the Soviet context? Within capitalism, crisis means a failure to use the surplus value produced and therefore a failure to maintain the rate of profit. In the last few decades this concept has had to be redefined in the sense that, with price control, monopolies have generally been able to maintain the rate of profit relatively stable — even in times of crisis. At any rate, crisis still means an increase in the average difficulty of the system to produce profit.[77] In the Soviet system, this does not apply. The crisis of the bureaucratic collectivist mode of production consists in a difficulty in achieving the most important and central ends of the plan. Thus, during the Stalinist period, the main objective was forced industrial growth with emphasis on the A sector of industry, and this was the criterion for evaluating the plan's success or failure. Beyond this definition of crisis, we can say that the plan fails in its most fundamentally important objectives when the previously described problems block or slow down the implementation of the plan so that its objectives are not achieved (as happened in 1971-75).

Accordingly, it can be said that the Soviet economy entered a situation of endemic crisis at the beginning of the 1960s. After the bleak period of 1961-64, there were the 1965 reforms. As already indicated, however, the 1966-70 plan was successful only in a formal sense (increase of gross income). This paved the way for the glaring failure of the ninth plan and the unresolved and growing problems with the tenth. Even the rate of growth in income supports this view.[78]

Given the different characteristics of capitalism and of bureaucratic collectivism, the Soviet crisis follows a different dynamic. In capitalism, there is no crisis without a drop in labor demand and all its consequences. In the Soviet Union, even during the 1970s, the dramatic failure of the ninth plan did not affect the high demand for labor despite the absorption of millions of new workers into the productive process. The reason for this is in the different

76. This has already been confirmed by the dubious results of the Soviet economy in 1977. Cf. D. Valoval, "Les insufficances du système de gestion," in *Problèmes Politiques et Sociaux,* No. 334, pp. 23ff.

77. Cf. H.J. Sherman, *Stagflation* (New York, 1976), pp. 60ff, who discusses the means used to do so.

78. In the period 1961-65, the rate of growth of income decreased (in terms of past growth rates) to 5.7 percent a year, in 1966-70 there was a certain improvement (7.1 percent a year), which masked, however, the unsuccessful achievements of the real objectives of the reform, and which then led to the decrease of 1971-75 (5.1 percent a year), while predictions for the current five-year period are 4.5 to 5.1 percent a year.

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nature of the Soviet system, which does not contain an adequate mechanism for encouraging the use of capital-intensive technology, resulting in savings of labor power. Thus, even during crises, Soviet development remains of an extensive kind and generates additional demand for labor, whereas in capitalism a crisis encourages reduction of labor costs and therefore a drop in demand for labor.

Within bureaucratic collectivism, the price system is also different from that of monopoly capitalism. At least since 1954, prices have always risen in periods of capitalist crises,[79] while in the Soviet Union there is no sign of the stagflation currently afflicting Western economies. Although Western observers are right in criticizing the apologetic nature of Soviet price statistics, it remains a fact that rents have not increased since 1928, the price of a Moscow subway ticket has not changed since 1935, and the price of bread and of many other goods has not gone up since the 1950s.[80] The 1965 reforms brought about changes in wholesale prices that have not affected retail prices.[81]

Clearly, the price system of the two economies is totally different.[82] Still, there is inflation in the Soviet Union, even if in a different and concealed form. Within capitalism inflation is a result of monopoly competition that pushes prices higher.[83] In the Soviet Union, this kind of competition does not exist because all companies belong to the state, which runs the economy according to different criteria than those of capitalism. But the plan does not produce the consumer goods workers want, so that there is an unmet demand and a clamp-down on consumption far worse than is generated in the West by open inflation. Thus, failure to meet the demand for consumer goods is the hidden inflation of the Soviet system.[84] Although the crises are quite different, in both cases it is the workers and consumers who pay the price of the system's dysfunctions: in the West, because price increases suppress consumption, and in the Soviet Union because of the impossibility of purchasing commodities, so that there is an even worse cutback in consumption.

The two crises even have different dates. The Soviet one began in the early 1960s, when the West in general was booming, while the capitalist crisis exploded during the 1970s (with the dollar and the oil crises). What is taking

79. Cf. Sherman, *op.cit.*, pp. 134, 165.
80. Cf. Piettre, *op.cit.*, pp. 96-97.
81. Cf. M. Lavigne, *op.cit.*, p. 346.
82. Even Berliner's analysis, which is certainly not pro-Soviet Union, leaves no doubt that the system of administered prices is inflexible in a way inconceivable in the West (*op.cit.*, pp. 364ff) and it is significant that before and after the 1965 reform, one of the hottest points of contention in the debate between reformers and bureaucrats was price flexibility. Thus, it is not surprising that Chacaturov recently warned Soviet economists that the problem of the lack of consumer goods should not be resolved by reverting to a mercantile form of pricing which would subject it to the law of supply and demand. In the Russian context this would make prices skyrocket (*op.cit.*, p. 121).
83. Cf. A. Carlo, "Imperialism, Monopolies and Inflation," in *Telos*, No. 34 (Winter 1977-78), pp. 89-110.
84. Cf. Piettre, *op.cit.*, pp. 97ff. and B. Minc, *"La Nuova Economia Politica* (Milan, 1977), pp. 156-157.

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place now is an interaction of the two and the meeting point is located in the balance of payments and at the levels of exchange between East and West. The system of world prices and the Soviet (and East European) deficits[85] are the transmission belt between one crisis and the other.

The problem is that Western price increases hit those countries that sought (and now depend on) trading with the West. In other words, the increase in prices of commodities purchased in the West affected the production costs of Polish and Hungarian commodities, so that part of the growing costs of purchasing Western technology had to be borne by consumers. Because of the increased importance of East-West exchange, the rapid rise of Western prices brought about by the crisis had more serious repercussions in the East than in the past. So far, only part of the price increases and only in certain countries has been passed on to consumers (and sometimes there have been sudden retractions, such as in Poland after the 1976 events). It is clear, however, that if consumers do not pay, someone has to, and that will be the economy as a whole, which will automatically reduce its chances for accumulation and development. If the trend toward an increase of trade and deficit with the West continues, sooner or later consumers will have to be presented with the bill, something which worries Soviet authorities.[86] This trend, however, is likely to continue because the structural problems that led the Soviet Union and the Comecon countries to trade with the West on an unequal basis have not been resolved.[87]

Prices of the world market are already beginning to affect the price structure of the planned economies of Eastern Europe — most conspicuously, those Comecon countries that are weakest and most closely linked with the West through trade. If this exchange and deficit increase, there will be a trend toward a mercantilization of the Comecon's price system (adaptation of internal prices to those of the imperialist world market) because, as we have seen, it is impossible for those economies to continue absorbing the partial or total cost of rising prices on the world market.

*The Soviet Trade Deficit. Contradictions in East-West Cooperation*

At the end of 1975 the Comecon's debt to the West was estimated to be 32

85. The cases of Poland and Hungary are symptomatic of this situation. While prices in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and East Germany remained stable during the 1970-75 period, they increased by 13.2 percent in Poland and by 14.6 percent in Hungary (total increases over the five years). Cf. Argout, *op.cit.*, p. 96. For Western governments, this would be a fairly normal inflation rate. East European governments, however, took this as a serious problem.

86. Cf. H. Ticktin, "The USSR: The Beginning of the End?" *Critique*, No. 7 (1976).

87. Conert maintains that it is not clear whether the current dysfunctions of the Soviet (and East European) system are a result of endogenous problems or of the world capitalist market. As already indicated, however, the dysfunctions of the Soviet system and of Comecon countries have a non-capitalist specificity. The very tendency to increase exchange with the West is a result of their internal contradictions. Cf. H.G. Conert, "Zur Diskussion über die Sowjetgesellschaft," in *Links*, No. 52, pp. 10ff.; and No. 54, pp. 7ff. This equivocal position of many involved in the *Linksdebate* is also to be found in the article written by the collective "Der lange Marsch," "Die Wahrheit ist unsere Starke. Zu R.A. Medwedens Untersuchung der Stalinsmus," *Links*, No. 51, pp. 9ff.

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billion dollars, and at least 10 billion were owed by the Soviet Union.[88] The amount of the deficit and its tendency to grow has also worried Tass.[89] Yet, despite reciprocal fears, collaboration proceeds. For the Soviets and for Comecon countries the reasons are well known; their need to move from extensive to intensive development forces them to seek Western technology and to purchase the plants and machinery they do not produce or which they could produce at exorbitant costs. For the West, there are two reasons. First of all, the conquest of a huge market (400 million people). Although Eastern European wages are low compared to Western standards, there clearly is an unmet demand for consumer goods. Secondly, the fact that some countries have accepted foreign investments (Romania, Hungary, and from 1976, Poland as well), despite the low wages of their workers, is doubtless a strong incentive. [90]

Also to be rejected is Levinson's view that East-West collaboration tends to reinforce the Soviet economic structure and, consequently, to pave the way for an alliance between the two dominant elites which could lead to a kind of planetary Gulag. Levinson points out that the managers of Western multinationals have no interest in transferring eastward Western trade-union

88. Thus, Levinson, *op.cit.*, p. 33, writes: "In January 1977, this overall deficit reached 60 billion dollars. The Soviets long-term debt with the West is estimated at 10 to 12 billion dollars, with an annual interest rate reaching 800 million dollars. In August 1976 the Morgan Guaranty Trust Company, one of the world's biggest banks which played a leading role in financing the Vodka-Cola agreement, declared that the East's deficit was as high as 32 billion dollars, and this figure is certainly lower than the real one, because the Morgan Guaranty Trust no doubt wanted to avoid a panic on the finance market. A confidential NATO report estimates these deficits at over 50 billion, but NATO publicly provides a figure of 35 billion, for the same reason that it wants to avoid any doubt that might arise over the solvency of the Communist countries and to prevent a universal assault on the private capitalist banks that have committed themselves deeply in this financial enterprise. In fact, the real debt is probably over 60 billion, if we consider that countries like France and Italy publish figures much lower than the credits they have extended.... As with most underdeveloped countries, the Soviet Union's debt has increased considerably: it is about 20 percent of the Soviet Union's exports in hard currency; and this is a level which bankers are beginning to find problematic." In "The USSR: The Beginning of the End?" (*op.cit.*, p. 92), Ticktin writes: "Thus the deficit with the USA, for the USSR, has increased from around 78 percent of exports in 1970 to 12 times the exports in 1975. The deficit in 1975 was 1,325 million rubles as compared with 885 million rubles in 1973, the previously highest deficit with the USA. Indeed, a comparison of the years of harvest failure of 1964, 1972, 1975 shows that the deficit has increased as a percentage of exports in each case from 34 percent to 41 percent and in 1975 to 57 percent. The deficit with West Germany stood in 1975 at almost 11 times the deficit in 1970, 1061 million rubles."

89. Cf. Levinson, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

90. The problem of foreign (Western) investments in a centralized economy is that these investments are capitalist in nature and therefore conflict with the plan. They are an accelerating force in the dismantling of the Eastern system, and the Soviets' diffidence of direct foreign investments in their territory is understandable. Cf. Wilczynski, *The Multinationals in East-West Relations* (London, 1976), p. 166, who points out that in Hungary, the powers of the central planners have been virtually usurped (by the managers of 'joint ventures') while in Romania, 'joint ventures' have been formally removed from planning. They end up forming capitalist enclaves within a planned economy and, given the expansionist tendencies of capitalism, they will probably begin affecting a social context which is already fragile and rife with contradictions. The presence of these companies in certain countries, furthermore, does not necessarily improve the situation of East European consumers. For example, the Swedish Volvo company has built an auto plant in Hungary with Hungarian participation. Yet, it produces cars mainly for export to South America. Cf. Levinson, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

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rights and wage levels, i.e., they are interested in maintaining the present system.[91] Yet, in order to be a good investment in terms of costs and returns, Western technology, transferred or sold to Eastern countries, must make a profit. But to do that, this technology, which is not neutral but an expression of capitalism, needs a framework of capitalist relations. If this framework is missing, it will not solve the problems of Eastern European societies, and will create a huge trade deficit. Trade with the West will not consolidate the bureaucratic collectivist system, but will tend to disintegrate it. Cases in point are Poland's and Hungary's problems encountered in domestic prices to world prices. However, trade with the West also has an objective destabilizing effect, which goes against interests in maintaining the status quo which, as Levinson points out, is the objective of the managers of multinationals.[92]

Other less radical contradictions with more short-term effects, however, disrupt relations between the dominant elites of the two systems and prevent the planetary Gulag feared by Levinson. First of all, there is the huge and growing deficit. The West has offered Comecon countries extremely advantageous credit conditions. But these terms are like the cheese in a mousetrap (the Soviet Union and the Comecon are definitely fat and juicy mice). Having accepted the bait, the Soviets were forced to pay prices 25 to 35 percent higher than on the world market.[93] Furthermore, to pay their growing debt, the Soviets are opening a series of banks in the West in order to obtain precious foreign currency. In this way, they end up competing with their multinational partners — something that does not please the latter. Also, the quality of products sold to Comecon countries is another source of complaint. The quality is certainly superior to anything Comecon countries can produce, but it is not the latest in technology.[94]

Levinson too has had to admit that not everything is running smoothly for the East-West cooperation. But this is not all: East-West cooperation also fans centrifugal tendencies within Comecon countries. Thus, while Hungary and Romania accept joint ventures, other Comecon members, headed by the Soviet Union, are against them, rightly fearing the disruptive consequences of the introduction of foreign capital within the collective bureaucratic system. These differences are obviously due to more basic differences among the various Eastern European states, which affect their trade and foreign policy. Among other things, certain countries' greater openness to the West has created friction with the Soviet Union.[95]

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91. *Ibid.*, p. 455.

92. A Yugoslav-type solution (restoration of capitalism, but underdeveloped and dependent on the Western metropolis) could be a solution. But the Soviet Union is not Yugoslavia, and the re-introduction of capitalism could have very different repercussions, creating a dangerous competitor (with the same characteristics and structure as Eastern European countries) in the place of the indebted and quite submissive commercial partner the Soviet Union is now.

93. Cf. Wilczynski, *The Multinationals, op.cit.*, p. 164.

94. As Levinson has pointed out, the Soviets are virtually excluded from the export of fifth-generation electronic computers, and the same goes for many high technology goods that have military use. To obtain a stable supply of these goods, the Soviets would have to give up part of their sovereignty. Cf. Levinson, *op.cit.*, p. 317; and Wilczynski, *Technology, op.cit.*, pp. 331ff.

94. For example, Romania and Hungary have a very different policy toward

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These centrifugal tendencies linked to relations with the West are also affecting other levels. Thus, the Soviets try to shift part of the problem with theit trade deficit on their Comecon partners. Recently, following the increase in oil prices, the Russians revised the prices of the oil they sell to other Comecon countries and, in the future, this price revision will take place once a year instead of once every five years.[96] As a result, Comecon countries now have a trade deficit with the Soviet Union. Pushing one's problems onto others is not easy or painless, nor can it be easy or painless to always have to resort to tanks in order to impose one's hegemony. Among other things, the partners are kicking back. Wilczynski pointed out that the Poles (but also the Russians) were always trying to sell their goods to the West at lower prices than those they demanded from their "socialist" comrades in the Comecon. In reply to the criticisms aroused by this policy, comparative price statistics are no longer published.[97]

While developing, East-West cooperation has substituted the old contradictions of the time of the Berlin blockade and Masaryk's "suicide" with more complex ones. In both systems the dominant classes have insoluble problems: the capitalists have difficulties trading with Eastern Europe without disrupting existing socio-political structures; and the Soviet political bureaucracy has problems incorporating Western technology. On the whole, the period of frontal contradictions and of the Manichean perspective of good versus evil (the Cold War) made choices simpler and problems less complex.

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Eurocommunism than the Soviet Union (and this explains the interest which the Italian Communist Party shows in the Romanian and Hungarian model). For these small countries, which do not have the problems of the Soviet Union, the fact of having the CPI in the government of a country like Italy, which through its own multinationals has played a leading role in economic detente with the East, can only improve relations with Western capital. Thus, these two countries have already calmly accepted the idea of joint ventures with Western capital. Clearly this does not please the Soviet Union, which has its own problems in trying to maintain the unity of the Eastern bloc as well as maintaining its hegemony over it.

96. Cf. J.A., "Comecon, intégration et déficit," in *Le Monde. L'Année Economique, 1976, op.cit.*, p. 71.

97. Cf. Wilczynski, *Technology, op.cit.*, pp. 74-75 and note 43.

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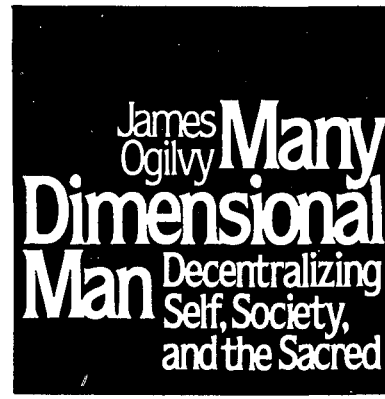


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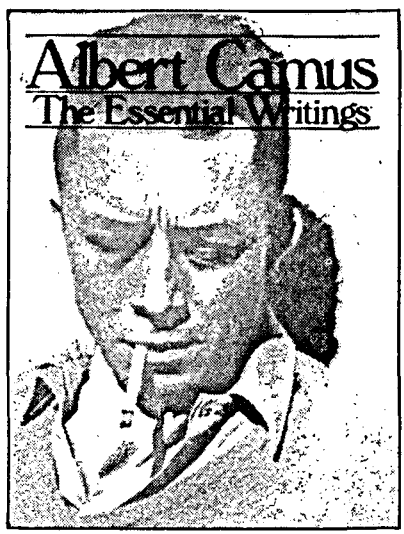


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# THE DETERMINED ASSERTION OF NORMALCY*

## by Sebastian Cobler

People in Germany have the singular talent of repressing or playing down their country's dark past in order to revive it again in everyday politics. An impressive example of this in recent years is the way in which surveillance and persecution of political enemies of the state are undertaken with increasing refinement and vigor. Under the pretext of countering terrorism, a new type of secret state police is being formed, as quietly as the state police itself functions. Opinion is subject to coercion while judicial decisions are based on political opinion. In brief, there is an attempt to insulate an entire society against ways of thinking not condoned by the police bureaucracy. Yet the blatant fascist potential here should not lead to hasty parallels. The Federal Republic is not characterized by fascist conditions or a fascist regime comparable to National Socialism. Even the fashionable, ostensibly moderate adjectives such as friendly or neo-fascist do more to obscure than to clarify the issue. Comparing or even equating current conditions with the barbarism of National Socialism, with the Gestapo or the SS, is uncalled for and irresponsible. Such comparisons tend cynically to underestimate the open, massive terror of the past and to overlook the qualitatively different, technocratically subtle forms in which today's state exercises power and bolsters its position of domination. Even more important, such comparisons lead to a premature rejection of the decisive means of political action and organization: the open and offensive development of an alternative public sphere.

The Federal Republic is on its way to becoming a police surveillance state. The byproduct of early warning, intimidation, and punishment establishes rules for an ostensible emergency, which thus threatens to become the normal condition. The politically blind, raging actions of a few desperados (in the real sense of the word) of the Red Army Faction and similar groups may have facilitated the more or less smooth implementation of the security measures to be analyzed here, but they did not trigger them. "The overall concept of domestic security," as the secretary of the interior explained to Parliament, "does not derive from concern about the terrorist acts of recent months, but from protracted, very thorough, objective, and calm consultations"[1] — at

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1. H.-D. Genscher (Free Democratic Party, hereafter FDP), Record of Parliament, hereafter *Bundestag*, June 22, 1972, p. 11467 (cited according to the stenographic record of the sessions referred to).

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least to the extent that they were conducted behind the scenes.

The extent and, above all, the techniques of the national security measures reveal the deceptive labeling that is publicly perpetrated. They attest to the fact that the build-up in domestic defense is not primarily designed to combat individuals engaged in violence. Rather, it is geared to persecuting any non-conformity of ideas and especially to impede any steps toward a popular public sphere that would challenge the state's monopoly on power. Even symbols of alternative power, as the president of the Federal Criminal Bureau, Horst Herold, calls it,[2] must be prevented. Consequently, the guiding principle behind the Federal Republic's national security is prevention, and the official designation is "preventive national security."

Increasing political and economic problems in the Federal Republic and advanced class conflicts in other European countries have given rise to concern about the Federal Republic's own future. In response, an array of political security measures is being designed to neutralize social conflicts before they arise. The problems with which other governments are wrestling are to be combatted in advance and, whenever possible, prevented, since any spark could fly in the wrong direction.

The secreatary of the interior must have considerable fears that the much touted "social peace" could be eventually threatened. According to Günther Nollau, until recently head of the Federal Secret Service, it is certain "that the day will come when the workers pay attention to more than what is in their pay envelopes. One day the consciousness of the masses will be ready to realize that their working conditions, especially the outgrowths of the division of labor, are 'inhumane,' i.e., they do not acknowledge the workers as human beings. If this feeling of a political movement can be transposed to mass outrage against this 'injustice,' then the situation will become critical. Our society has its coercive means to combat acts of terror by small groups. I doubt whether our democracy would have the strength to aim machine guns at masses of workers in revolt. I don't see any Noske, who declared in 1919, 'Someone has to be the bloodhound.' "[3]

Regardless of whether the comments by the former head of the Secret Service are based on a certain *déformation professionelle* or on a complete overestimation of what might seriously be expected to happen, the crucial thing is that such expectations correspond to decisions made in the area of "security." And even if "peoples' struggles" take place only in the imagination

2. H. Herold in E. Kogon, ed., *Terrorismus und Gewaltkriminalität, Herausforderungen an den Rechsstaat* (Frankfurt am Main, 1965), p. 49.

3. G. Nollau, *Wie sicher ist die Bundesrepublik?* (Munich, 1976), p. 198. Nollau, a Social Democrat, proceeds to look at his party's political program and its ability to learn: "A situation where such decisions would have to be made need not arise. The diminished status of people in the work process can be improved through so-called co-determination.... Efforts toward a so-called humanization of the work environment go in the same direction.... Worker representation (or co-determination) and 'humanization' of the work environment may not combat extremists, but such measures could deprive them of mass appeal. This could create among workers the impression that something is being done 'upstairs' to see that they receive justice, and thus prevent the development of a fertile ground for revolutionary inclinations." *Ibid.*, pp. 189ff.

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of a few communist sectarians, it is certain that the ongoing extensive economic crisis in the Federal Republic will bring about political and social conflict, the extent and direction of which cannot yet be foreseen. In any case, it is already evident that economic losses go hand in hand with losses in political value — this is precisely what the security debates stress with increasing urgency. "Domestic stability and, thus, security," it is said, "are threatened more than we can tolerate by an intellectual and political ambivalence that is not sufficiently conscious of the values that constitute our free democracy."[4] Those groups who could be calmed with the promise of better times in slogans of "cooperative effort," "stability," "social security," and "growth" are now confronted with the results of government policy and begin to recognize the shortcomings of that policy's legitimacy. One day the promise of better times may no longer be enough. The SPD's promises of reform have proven to be like a currency with no security behind it, one that cannot be cashed in. Because of extensive cuts in social services, even legally grounded claims — such as pensions and unemployment compensation — can no longer be guaranteed full satisfaction. This could be of particular political consequence for the Federal Republic, in contrast to other countries, inasmuch as "social peace" has been bought by constantly pointing to precisely those provisional measures which must now be rescinded when the situation becomes serious. These measures are collapsing in precisely the situation they were designed to prevent. Therefore, the years of talking about a social network for times of crisis threaten to boomerang once the much-touted network begins to dissolve. "The politics of social equalization," the federal chancellor explained, "has seen to it until now that the workers see this state as the guarantor of their interests." He goes on to warn: "If our coalition cannot work its way out of its current difficulties, then Germany really will suffer the social unrest and social problems and even political consequences that have been evident in other countries for years."[5] The SPD's social expert Egon Lutz puts it even more succinctly: "It would be bad, very bad, if unemployment were to be rooted in high rates of continual unemployment, if 600,000 or even fewer unfortunates were to be pushed to the periphery permanently. Then we would be partly responsible for an explosive potential exceeding the critical mass necessary to blow our society to pieces with more reliability than even the most wildly determined anarchist could achieve."[6]

With this in mind, the government successfully turns obvious fears of crisis to its own advantage. Because experience has shown that most citizens are interested in politics only to the extent that they are personally affected by it — this means, above all, tax and social policy — the government uses the diffuse concept of domestic security and passes related measures off as

4. Vogel (Christian Democratic Union Party, hereafter CDU), *Bundestag*, June 12, 1975, p. 12437.

5. H. Schmidt, "Zehn Thesen zur demokratischen Gemeinsamkeit," in *Vorwärts*, No. 45 (Nov. 10, 1977), p. 16, and H. Schmidt, speech before the SPD-*Bundestagsfraction*, quoted in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (*FAZ*), March 26, 1977, p. 6.

6. E. Lutz (SPD), quoted in *Frankfurter Rundschau* (*FR*), August 23, 1977, p. 10.

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reforms, as "social policy in its essence" and "part of the concrete quality of life."[7] A correlation is thus suggested between domestic security, abstractly threatened, and the individual's existential security, which is threatened concretely. It is suggested that the strengthening of "our state" will forcefully eliminate one's own weakness. In a word, a virtue is made of necessity — the real threat to the populace is displaced by a staged one. Thus, people's fears are not mollified. Rather, they are used, they are addressed, naturally from another side. The concerns diverted in this manner are then exploited to legitimate the execution of security measures.

In Germany, the strategy of intensifying national security while claiming political "emergency and crisis situations" has always worked. Max Weber summarized in 1918: "We must always bear in mind the complete certainty with which the interests of the old order and the unchecked system of civil service will exploit every outbreak of union activism, no matter how insignificant, to put pressure on the unfortunately rather weak nerves of the petty bourgeoisie."[8] This is illustrated by the following: The 1878 "law against the public danger posed by the efforts of social democracy" (the so-called socialist law) was justified by claiming there had been an attack on Emperor Wilhelm; the 1898 draft of a "law for combating violent acts of anarchism" was presented after an assassination attempt on Empress Elisabeth of Austria; the August 29, 1921, "decree by the president of the Reich for the protection of the republic" was issued three days after Matthias Erzberger was murdered. This decree made punishable any "calls to disobey the law" as well as the production and distribution of publications that "motivated people in the interest of violent change or abolition of the constitution." Recall the comparable decree issued by the president of the Reich on June 24, 1922, the day after Walter Rathenau's murder, which forbade, among other things, the "approval of violence," a regulation that in spite of previously repeated attempts had not been successfully anchored in the penal code. In 1976 this regulation was given considerably sharper teeth. Recall the Reichstag arson and its legal consequence: the "decree for the protection of people and state" of February 28, 1933, which eliminated all bourgeois freedoms and which the Nazis used to seal their reign of terror. Recall the Korean War, which in 1951 led to the new political penal code, passed in great haste and designed to counteract the "dangers of communist infiltration from the East." Recall finally the numerous legal attacks on civil liberties and basic freedoms which in recent years have followed actions attributed to the Red Army Faction.

The history of the Federal Republic's national security proves that the various justifications for expanding the rights of the police and the judiciary were and are interchangeable according to respective political demands. In the 1950s and 1960s conjuring up a "threat from the East" helped justify any

7. Federal Minister of Justice Vogel (SPD), "Innere Sicherheit ist ein elementares Bürgerrecht," in *Recht und Politik*, No. 3 (1976), p. 135.

8. M. Weber, "Parlament und Regierung im neugeordneten Deutschland," in M. Weber, *Gesammelte politische Schriften* (Tübingen, 1971), p. 405.

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state action against citizens; today the reference to terrorism suffices. Of course, the definition of terrorism in individual cases likewise falls under the state's monopoly on power.

This development has been examined in detail elsewhere.[9] This essay will simply attempt to depict the essential characteristics of the Federal Republic's national security, according to Willy Brandt, a case of a "calm and determined assertion of normalcy."[10]

Despite the variety of means used to attain this objective, an overall strategy is apparent. The arsenal of national security in the Federal Republic, suggestively called "defense of the constitution," includes a type of psychological warfare, increasingly cunning tools of surveillance and regulation as well as court sanctions. However, all of these measures take the following two considerations into account: the fear of people acting collectively and the establishment of defense systems in the areas of thought and opinion, expression, and public opposition. Whether the issue is trials against demonstrators or against people who occupy construction sites for nuclear plants, indictments on charges of "insulting the state" or "approving the use of violence," professional proscription, or maintenance of "peace in the factory" or in the community — opposition is criminalized as terror. Criticism, analyses and protest are punished as "divisiveness." If necessary, the public sphere is forcibly reduced to that which is published with official sanction.

There is talk of a threat to the "intellectual security of the state"[11] and of the need to arm the state, not only in a material sense, but also in terms of thought. "Domestic security is not just a question of power and its application. Domestic security has, above all, an intellectual, a moral, and a political dimension. It demands intellectual and political leadership."[12]

One can designate the practice of professional proscription as the most extensive measure in this direction; it is the most systematic and most stringent. It began in the area of civil service because "enemies of the constitution trying to undermine our order by walking softly (are) worse than those who use force."[13] The Constitutional Court, the highest court in the country, considers the term "professional proscription" a mere "slogan for agitation," designed "to arouse political emotions."[14] A Hessian

9. This contribution is a summary of my study *Die Gefahr geht von den Menschen aus — Der vorverlegte Staatsschutz* (Berlin, 1978); English translation as *Law, Order and Politics in West Germany* (London, 1978).

10. W. Brandt, in a letter to the president of the Labor Party of Holland. The correspondence is in *Der Lange Marsch*, No. 19 (December 1975), p. 5.

11. Krall (FDP), *Bundestag*, June 7, 1972, p. 10933.

12. Dregger (CDU), *Bundestag*, March 13, 1975, p. 10742.

13. Vogel (CDU), *Bundestag*, February 14, 1974. p. 5073. Similarly, from a conference of law enforcement experts: "Much supports the idea that, in the long run, the most serious dangers to our freedoms do not originate in the terrorist acts of anarchists, but rather in the right-wing and, above all, left-wing extremist organizations that follow a longer-term and more disciplined strategy. In the current situation, they avoid violence for the most part, and have instead taken up 'the long march through the institutions.' The spectacular acts of violence on the part of terrorists distract both the public and the police to a disturbing degree from other dangerous forms of extremism."

14. Constitution Court Decision (BVerfGE), May 22, 1975 (2 BvL 13-73), p. 46.

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administrative court sees it simply as something that "makes career advancement difficult."[15] Professional proscription, allegedly so innocuous, has posed an existential threat to more than 4,000 citizens in the Federal Republic. Despite their appropriate training, the state bars them from practicing their profession solely on the basis of their political opinions. The numbers are growing constantly. By appealing to the so-called radicals decree of January 1972, the state brands them with the political battle cry "enemy of the constitution" and thereby denies them their rights. To justify this, the state accuses them of convictions deemed injurious to the state — a phrase taken from the Gestapo's repertoire — because they are socialist or communist. The state points to membership in legal leftist organizations or assumes persons guilty on the basis of association and family ties. Yet, not just politically oppositional views and comments are persecuted; even those whose attitudes toward this state is politically indifferent are threatened. Thus, a Bavarian administrative court recently approved professional proscription of a teacher with the justification that although the man did not pose a direct threat to national security, he was an unpredictable risk because, according to the decision, he had "not taken a clear enough position against communist objectives." Further, a person must be refused work in the civil service not only "if an applicant actively opposes the free order, but even if he-she is indifferent to it."[16]

While National Socialist officials returned to office after 1949 with legal guarantees and no fuss (and even numerous neo-fascists are civil servants with no problem), the list of leftists affected by professional proscription gets longer and longer. It ranges from teachers, lawyers, doctors, social workers, nurses, postal and railroad clerks, civil service workers and employees to the cemetery gardener and the military cook. These are not grotesque exaggerations and bizarre individual cases; there is method here, and it is well calculated. The unpredictability of the entire process intensifies the effect of preventive political abstinence and self-censorship. In this vein an administrative judge recommended that everyone be made aware early of the significance and practice of the "radicals decree" because, for all young people, it is "of immediate significance, inasmuch as they have to gear their behavior during their studies to it."[17]

The practice of professional proscription has since been blessed and legalized by an authoritarian interpretation of civil liberties by the highest federal courts. The judges who participated in these decisions include some who made a name for themselves as "preservers of the law" under the Nazis. This, too, is a well-known part of judicial reality in the Federal Republic.[18]

15. Administrative Court, Darmstadt, Decision of Jan. 1, 1976 (IVM622-75), p. 5.
16. District Court, Darmstadt.
17. Administrative Court, Darmstadt.
18. As one example, Judge Edmond de Chapeaurouge, who participated under fascism in verdicts of "racial defilement" (miscegenation) in the State Court of Hamburg, is now a federal judge. Another among many others is Judge Weber-Lortsch, SS and police commander for occupied Norway, later in the Reichscommissary of the Ukraine, today also a federal judge. A third example is Judge Willy Geiger, until recently a justice of the Federal Supreme Court, who

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The May 22, 1975, decision of the Constitution Court has had decisive significance. Here the "guardians of the constitution" have given an impressive lesson in political justice that is no longer concerned with the implementation of its practice. Like a potpourri of modern constitutional history, all political and social differences between the Wilhelminian era and the demands of a democracy are passed over or smoothed away when the court draws its justification for professional proscription — of course, it is not called that — from a pre-constitutional concept of the "state's servants' obligatory loyalty to their master." The explicit, constitutional guarantee that every German, regardless of political persuasion, has equal access to all public offices and that the only criteria for selection be suitability, qualification, and occupational performance was made in 1949 with the memory of Nazi practices in mind. This constitutionally anchored prohibition against discrimination has in effect been suspended by the Constitution Court's arbitrary interpretation: it found that political suitability must also be proven, i.e., political reliability. The foregone conclusion that the practice of certain professions requires proof of corresponding competence is thus expanded with no further ado to include a demand for certified political reliability. This takes the form of requiring that civil servants or employees avow their unconditional loyalty to the existing state, to "their state," as the Supreme Court puts it, "which they should serve," in which they should "feel at home," "now and always." The "commitment to political loyalty" demands "more than a merely formally correct but otherwise uninterested cool, internally distanced attitude to state and constitution."[19]

It is not empty pathos that is being produced here. Rather, the principle of constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties is being turned upside down. Such rights no longer embody a commitment on the part of the state to autonomous citizens. Instead, the citizens are committed to the state. Under the surface, a system of legality is being transformed into a system of loyalty[20] which reduces civil liberties to decisions "from above." These decisions may be retracted at any time and are only granted to those who make loyal use of these liberties. The court clarifies this complete turn-around of classical concepts of democracy: it is "expected that the citizens will defend this order and that enemies of this order, even if they operate formally within a legal

during the Third Reich was, among other things, prosecutor for a special court and author of a legal treatise on the "preservation of racial purity" among newspaper editors. Cf. *Der Spiegel*, No. 32 (1975), p. 32; Proceedings of the Russell Tribunal, *op.cit.*, p. 103; and Cobler, *op.cit.*, (note 9), p. 122. After 1945 not one judge was made accountable for crimes while in judicial office. On the contrary, many of them still remain in office.

19. Federal Constitutional Court, *op.cit.*, pp. 18, 1, heading 2. The proceedings against civil servants in Berlin who had refused to stand for a minute of silence in memory of former Attorney General Buback reveal the fact that the issue is not just political activity, but corresponding loyalty to the state as well, an emotional attitude. This "conduct unbecoming" was considered an "abuse of professional duty" and furthermore as an indication of the political sympathies of those thus censured regarding Buback's assassins. Cf. the report of FR, July 19, 1977, p. 4 and the brochure "Gedenkminute für Buback im Bezirksamt Spandau" (Berlin, 1977), ed. by FHSS-Komitee gegen Berufsverbote und politische Disziplinierung.

20. See U.K. Preuss, "Legalität — Loyaltät — Legitimität" in *Leviathan — Zeitschrift für Sozialwissenschaft*, No. 4 (1977), pp. 450ff.

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framework, will not be tolerated."[21]

This paves the way for political exorcism and the arbitrary practice of depriving those political opponents who are declared "enemies of the state" of their legal rights as citizens.[22] Thus, it is only logical that individuals are classified as those "worthy of civil liberties" and those "unworthy of civil liberties."[23]

Germany has a tradition of dealing arbitrarily with persons of deviant political persuasions. Recall the consequences of the 1956 ban on the Communist Party of Germany in the Federal Republic of the 1950s, not to mention the Nazis' practices.[24] The fact that professional proscription is enjoying such wide application today or, more precisely, since the radicals decree was issued in January 1972, has its reasons in concrete social developments. The beginning of the 1970s saw a generation of persons applying for civil service, especially teaching jobs, whose political orientations were in part molded by the anti-authoritarian revolt of the 1960s. The slogan, then current, of the "march through the institutions" made the administrators of those institutions sit up and listen, and eventually, after a certain period of confusion, act as well. The social-democratic state of Hamburg led the way in 1972 for the ordinance concerning radicals which was approved by Chancellor Brandt and the heads of the individual states; it was of consequence for the entire federation. As President Stoltenberg of Schleswig-Holstein remembers, "this was not an improvised, spontaneous decision. Rather, it was the result of thorough preparatory studies undertaken primarily by the secretaries of the interior of the federation and the individual states. After much discussion they presented a joint proposal to the heads of state."[25]

Of course, it was and is not primarily the employment of a few hundred

21. State (Land) Administrative Court. In regard to the authoritarian attitude of "granting" basic rights, cf. the decision of the Federal Administrative Court (*Bundesverwaltungsgericht*) in the record of the Federal Constitutional Court (BVerfGE) 14, 25, which reads in part, "Basic rights are not granted to the citizen to be exercised indiscriminately but rather in the citizen's function as a member of the community and thereby also in the general interest."

22. I speak of a legal expatriation, because this denial of rights is legalized and constitutionalized through the courts and — to some extent — through the constitution itself (cf. Article 9, Paragraph 2, Article 18, Article 21, Paragraph 2, *Grundgesetz* [Basic Law] ). In his affidavit for the Russell Tribunal, Preuss has shown how the Constitution of the Federal Republic has been characterized by a "constitutional discrimination among forms of citizen conduct," in contrast to the Weimar Constitution. This is a break with the liberal tradition of a classic democratic concept of the constitution. Cf. U.K. Preuss, "Strategien staatsbürgerlicher Diskriminierung" in Russell Tribunal, *op.cit.*, pp. 78ff.

23. According to the distinguished attorney von Winterfield, advisor on legal policy to the federal government, in an affidavit on the police "shoot-to-kill" statute, quoted in *Hessische Polizei Rundschau,* No. 10 (1973), p. 12.

24. Cf. the "Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums" of April 7, 1933, in the *Reichsgesetzbuch* (Reich Legal Code), I, 175ff and, after 1945, the Sept. 19, 1950, order of the Federal Government concerning the political activities of civil servants in opposition to the democratic basic order, the so-called Adenauer-Heinemann Decree (GMBl 1950, 93). On rulings of the courts regarding *Berufsverbot* in the 1950s, cf. the book cited in note 9, p. 125ff. On the history of *Berufsverbot* in Germany since 1974, see the documentation by E. Brandt, ed., *Die politische Treuepflicht* (Karlsruhe, Heidelberg, 1976).

25. Stoltenberg (CDU), *Bundesrat,* February 20, 1976, p. 20.

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persons as civil servants that is feared; it can be assumed that the majority of these persons would end the touted "march through the institutions" once inside them. Instead, there is a greater fear that the employment of persons who are critical of the state or who even have some reservations about it could speed up a political development that ties in with a functional transformation of the state itself. To the extent that the monopolization of capital has seen the expansion of its state's economic and political activities, the state itself becomes more and more involved in the conflux of crises which it is supposed to regulate. There are increasingly frequent and massive political arguments about and directed to the state. This is demonstrated both by the activities of citizens action groups and by strikes now regularly observed by the police.

Professional proscription is an attempt by the state apparatus to ward off attacks from the rear, at least in the domestic field. As the Constitution Court explained in the above-mentioned decision regarding professional proscription, "if the state does not intend to undermine its own existence, it needs a corps of civil servants who will stand up for and defend the state and the constitutional order in crises and conflicts of loyalty.... If the corps of civil servants is no longer dependable, then society and its state are 'lost'.... The political duty to loyalty proves itself in times of crisis and serious conflict situations."[26] This applies to those situations that lead to plans for an "intellectual armament and mobilization."

For a long time now, practices of political persecution similar to professional proscription have extended into areas formally outside the state's control. These practices have been continued by organizations and institutions such as churches, the media, and unions. We need not even mention the capitalist factories, in which such practices, often in the guise of economic necessity, have always been the normal state of affairs. Since the beginning of the 1970s, active socialists and communists have been excluded from the unions on the ground of a so-called declaration of incompatibility. Because of the monopoly-like position of these organizations in the Federal Republic, the persons thus excluded are essentially robbed of their political freedom and suffer related disadvantages regarding the laws governing work and compensation. The unions' practice of exclusion is a manifestation of their turn toward social democratic state unions. It indicates their intensive cooperation, if not collaboration, with the political police. The state's techniques of repression are copied on a wide front, and political repression becomes more and more "nationalized": "Model Germany" on the home front.

Even civil law is infused with the political discrimination unleashed by professional proscription. In Berlin, the case of a young scientist has become known and endorsed by the courts. The woman in question had been commissioned by the Federal Institute for Research in Occupational Education to write a recommendation on questions of personnel planning in the plants. Her recommendation was first accepted by the Institute but was

26. Federal Constitutional Court Decision, *op.cit.*, pp. 31, 15, 18.

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then suddenly rejected as "not applicable." The institute had learned that the scientist had signed an election petition of a communist organization. A Berlin court, to which the young woman appealed, judged that her behavior had "retroactively rendered her work useless" although she had "actually performed" the task expected of her. The court ruled that the contract had been not simply for the completion of a flawless manuscript, "but for one which could be published by the Federal Republic." Given the author's known political activity, the institute could no longer be expected to publish her findings.[27] The path first blazed by professional proscription has been considerably expanded by this insane decision. It is probably only a matter of time before tenants' rights are also affected by this development.

Comparisons to McCarthyism in the 1950s are quite obvious. The political significance of such coercion of thought does not derive from the number of persons directly affected by professional proscription alone. There is a much higher number of those who have been investigated by the political police and subjected to degrading and humiliating inquisitions in recent years. In addition to the approximately 4,000 cases of professional proscription, the secret service has undertaken more than 1.5 million investigations. One can only guess at the actual extent of the data banks set up for these purposes and the techniques of political intelligence activities. The only certain thing is that such extensive observations and inquisitions require a highly developed police apparatus. They likewise require the willing "cooperation of all responsibly minded citizens," as stated in the official guidelines on infiltration and denunciation.

One school board's decree declares, for example, that "the confirmation of a civil servant involves suitability, competence, and occupational performance. To judge these things the school director must rely not only on his own observations — in conferences, classroom visits, and school and extracurricular public events — but also on reports by colleagues, pupils and parents."[28] The appeal to informants, auxiliary sheriffs, and death by reputation is having a boom.

Without the collaboration and cooperation of the political police and the secret service, whose task is euphemistically described as defending the Constitution, the professional proscription could not be implemented. Numerous law enforcement agencies, which already function as a kind of

27. District Court of Appeals, Berlin, decision of January 26, 1976, in NJW 1977, pp. 251ff.

28. Memorandum of the Senator for Arts and Sciences, School Supervision Dept., State of Bremen, June 18, 1975 (40-00-19-12-0). The Federal Law Enforcement Office began an attempt in 1975 to enlist assistance for the police. It exhorted all West German gas station attendants to "be on the alert for fugitives, especially anarchist criminals." "We expect a dramatic boost to the search on the basis of your observations," says a letter from the Federal Law Enforcement Office (BKA) to service-station owners. "With your expertise in servicing motor vehicles, you are certainly able to recognize suspicious conditions and to report them to the police" — for example, "large amounts of change for coin-operated gas pumps" or "an unusually large number of tools," "large amounts of reserve fuel." Letter from the Federal Law Enforcement Office to West German service-station owners, May 9, 1975. The plan to utilize barbers as well — to check whoever got a new hairstyle or hair color — was not pursued. A journal of dentistry published dental photos of some of the fugitives, with the request to notify the police should any suspicious persons visit them.

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"thought police," have been significantly expanded in the last few years and have been granted increasingly broad powers. The prime goal is the perfection of police prevention, which is carried out according to the motto, "see everything, but don't be seen."[29]

In 1972, new legislation for the Federal Crime Bureau and the secret service extended their jurisdiction and furthered their organizational coordination: despite the explicit prohibition of earlier laws, the secret service has assumed police functions while the police are patterning their activity more and more after the unchecked and uncontrollable practices of the secret services. According to one expert's recommendation, "Ultimately, the police must see to it that they are unpredictable."[30]

The exchange of perceptions about individual citizens, as the results of official spying are perversely called, among various state security institutions as well as with different public and private agencies, has long been the rule and even, in some states, the law. The police and the secret service receive such official help from private firms and unions, from schools and higher educational institutions, from trade and industrial associations and chambers of commerce, from bureaus of finance and labor, public health officers, and public libraries — a cooperative effort that also works admirably in the reverse direction and which, in its breadth, was not available even to the Gestapo, to whom only police authorities were required to furnish information.

The police in several major cities such as Munich and Berlin have created for themselves a very special kind of "official help": the so-called contact officers. By assigning police to work "close to the citizenry" — widely viewed as a new type of uniformed block guard — there is an apparent attempt to refurbish the tarnished image of the police, to gain trust, and in this way to gather "perceptions" about the inhabitants of whole districts. The work of a "contact officer" consists exclusively in observing and recording, striking up friendly conversations and cultivating contacts with janitors and tenants and with customers and salespersons in neighborhood stores, as well as with retired persons and children at play and — by special exemption — over a beer or two at the corner bar with an ear on the surrounding conversation. "The state may not be an organism," explains the chief of the Federal Crime Bureau, "but it must behave like an organism in order to be able to survive.

29. G. Wolf, Munich chief of police, in *Die Polizei*, No. 6 (1978), p. 194. The classical distinction between prevention and repression has progressively less meaning in police practices. Among the police, this trend is discussed under the heading of "prevention through repression." "Police intervention is principally neither repressive nor preventive, but basically operative. The concept of being operative includes not only the preventive and repressive elements — it is not merely an addition — but rather a larger concept. It represents new realms of police activity." A. Stümper, "Repression und Prävention als überholte Unterscheidung," in *Kriminalistik*, No. 2 (1974). On the types of such "operative action," cf. the police activities described in the text. On the increase of repression in the classical sense, cf. the master plan for a federally unified penal code, as well as the upgrading through personnel and technology of the law enforcement agencies and the border security forces to a federal police force. This includes the creation of paramilitary special police units such as GSG 9 and others.

30. *Ibid.*

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One means of constant contact with reality is the osmotic filter of the police."[31]

In some cities there are attempts to refine the filter even more: while public funds for youth employment and social work positions are being cut, and in the face of rising youth unemployment and crime, there is talk of instituting plainclothes "youth police" who would patrol youth centers and discotheques, passing themselves off as "social workers," even though their only concern and occupation would be crime prevention. The concept is that "the police must extend their eyes, ears, heart, and hands as far as possible. Correct assessments of the situation and appropriate police assignments, as well as the effective surveillance of areas of concern to the police and related methods of investigation, all depend fundamentally on knowledge about people, about their lives and thoughts, i.e., on perceptions and 'feeling out' the immediate surroundings."[32]

The purpose of such a painstaking and all-encompassing surveillance of the population — not merely of those citizens declared to be "enemies of the state" — is also served by a sweeping system of registration: there are plans for the introduction of so-called "personal code numbers," which would lead to the collection of all the stored information on a person: data from finance and labor bureaus, from health insurance offices, insurance companies, and training institutes, from the penal record and from the police and secret services. The authorities would have at their fingertips information about the family situation and financial status, the personal habits, contacts, and associates, the health, education and work performance, political interests and activities — in short, about the entire personal development of each and every citizen. The expansion of the police computer system in connection with this electronic surveillance testifies to the experience that nowadays no police state can function with dusty mountains of archives and disorganized file cabinets.

Just whom, and for what reason, the state's computers touch is not known to those affected, who also are unaware of the combinations which are possible using these data in conjunction with others, from private computers, for example. Only the police oversee "all persons who at any time have come into contact with the police."[33] There no longer exists any domain that is not penetrated by the police in the interests of "warding off latent dangers." As in the race between the hare and the hedgehog, they are always there already:

31. H. Herold in *Wirtschaftswoche*, April 7, 1972, p. 20. "The patrolman on the beat is well acquainted with his area and with the problems that arise, and, more importantly, he is familiar to the citizens there. Upon assuming his duties he has introduced himself to them by name through an informational letter and his calling card. To the citizens he is not just any cop on the beat, but Herr Müller, Schulze or Lehmann, with whom one can even chat from time to time. This forms the bridge of trust so important to public security. The patrolman sets his duty time according to the needs of his district." *Hessische Polizei Rundschau*, No. 8 (1977), p. 14.

32. A. Stümper, in *Die Polizei*, No. 11 (1975), p. 368. On the concept of the "youth police," see *Hessische Polizei Rundschau*, No. 2 (1977), pp. 7ff.

33. G. Bertling, Hamburg crime police, cited in G.E. Hoffmann, "Bürger Hinter Datengittern," in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, a supplement to the weekly newspaper *Das Parlament*, No. B25 (1977), p. 6.

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in citizen action groups, at political organizations and functions, at demonstrations and strikes, in schools and universities.

Thanks to the deficient loyalty to the state of certain initiates, new details of the scope and techniques of investigation and registration have become known in the last few months. The mere sight of the tip of this gigantic iceberg is chilling. The more so as police are operating literally underground, in a political-legal limbo: the steady growth of police power is accompanied by its increasing anonymity. A secret security police is being developed, beyond all effective legal or political control by invoking obscure "matters of security" and "interests of secrecy." With the sedulous assistance of the judiciary, the constitutional principle of the balance of the courts and the executive is becoming meaningless.[34]

The police are doubly secure: with few exceptions, they are sheltered from the judiciary, which in turn protects them from the public, since the penal code channels and limits publicly held debates over the forms and consequences of the exercise of state power. If, through accidents or "leaks," some light should penetrate into the semi-darkness under which the sacrosanct security organs operate, then what may happen is that the exposé is declared a scandal and is legally prosecuted — instead of pursuing the exposed state security bureaus. "Whoever fails to see the servants of the state — judges, soldiers and police — as representatives of the community as a whole, damages internal security."[35] And when crude practices by police are attacked with harsh language, the state's attorneys promptly counter by instituting criminal proceedings against anyone who drafts and distributes such texts. It's a simple matter of turning the tables: according to a Berlin pamphlet, the state, caught in the act, reacts by slipping into the role of victim.

The juridical vehicle for this can be found in a provision that appears rather ludicrous: Paragraph 90a of the Penal Code, which punishes "slander of the state" — a relic from pre-constitutional times, when it was called "insulting the Crown." This grotesque legalistic repersonalization of authority is the penal counterpart of the obligatory "loyalty oath" administered to state employees. Paragraph 90a and similar sanctions have always been activated in Germany during those times when governmental prestige was weak. Today, as well, the frequency and intensity of accusations and denunciations for having slandered the state are increasing in direct proportion to pointed criticisms provoked by the state's own actions.

For example, writings have been criminalized in which the Federal Republic is referred to as a "capitalist" state or a state "under the rule of arbitrary law" [*Unrechsstaat* — a play on *Rechsstaat*, the official designation of the Federal Republic], and in which the police are described as "civil war troops," or which make reference to the Nazi past of leading politicians.

34. On this point see the reports in CILIP — Newsletter on Civil Liberties and Police Developments (West Berlin), August-September 1978.

35. President of the Federal Republic W. Scheel, Address at the swearing-in of police, in *Die Polizei*, No. 1 (1976), p. 33.

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Lawsuits based on slander of the state have also been brought up against people who, like Gudrun Ensslin's father, took the liberty of expressing doubts about the suicides at Stammheim and posed questions, which have never been satisfactorily answered. The truth content of a particular assertion is not at issue; it is sufficient, in the provision's sententious wording, to have "maliciously made the state appear despicable."

Many verdicts are worded in a similarly indignant and lachrymose fashion. Thus, a court in Bonn only recently lectured three persons accused under Paragraph 90a, to the effect that they were guilty of "having maliciously slandered the Federal Republic of Germany, one of the most liberal democracies in the world, at a time when the state is being forced to defend itself against a well-organized gang of murderers; and of having specifically attacked the [state's] efforts at defense in this situation, thereby indirectly supporting the politically disguised terrorists."[36]

*Raison d'état* — there can be no other name for this — thus ranks ahead of freedom of opinion. Exercising the latter "at the wrong time" is then prosecuted in the courts: full freedom of opinion and information is granted only under certain conditions, determined from "the top"; and even then, freedom may not exceed established guidelines: in each case criticisms of the state must operate within the limits of "healthy and permissible criticism."[37] For "this state grants liberties to its citizens to a degree previously unknown. In this state there exists no legal foundation for oppression" — read: and therefore no oppression takes place. Whoever claims the contrary is acting "out of a wrongful and hostile attitude toward this state," and must be punished accordingly.

Thus far the epitome of the aforementioned jurisprudence on Paragraph 90a is probably a Kafkaesque decision of the Supreme Court of Berlin. The affair concerns 47 professors who edited a volume of documents including a text that takes a position on the assassination of Federal Attorney General Buback. This "Buback Obituary" had been previously confiscated because of alleged sympathy with terrorism. The Berlin prosecuting attorney's office had preferred charges of "slandering the state" against the professors, but had been turned away by a trial court having jurisdiction in the matter: although the professors had published an unequivocally punishable text, the court held that they themselves escaped responsibility since they had explicitly disclaimed any identification with the "Buback Obituary" in the preface to their publication.[38] The prosecutor appealed the decision and obtained an indictment; the next highest court held that the professors should indeed stand trial on charges of "slandering the state" — not, however, because of the text itself, but specifically because of its introductory preface. By having declared in the preface that, despite substantial reservations regarding the text, they nevertheless felt compelled to defend the public discussion of the issue raised therein against any attempts at censorship by the state, the

36. District Court, Bonn, decision of April 14, 1978 (45Cs50Js 419-77), p. 16.
37. District Court of Duisburg, decision of September 12, 1975 (15Ms73-74), p. 10.
38. State Court of Appeals, Düsseldorf, decision of February 15, 1977 (2Ss 1374-76), p. 8f.

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professors had monstrously accused the state of suppressing freedom of opinion, and hence had "slandered the state."[39] The mere reproach of censorship thus resulted in their being censored.

The rationalizations and techniques of such measures are based on the same principle that motivates the practice of professional proscription: the legal exclusion of political minorities, stigmatized as "enemies," and the management of public political information and discussion. The corresponding shift of legislation to the domain of opinions and expression destroys the general legal separation between basically non-punishable intentions on the one hand, and individual cases of punishable actions on the other. This type of political justice is not new: it was the "achievement" of the National Socialist "jurisprudence of intention," the principles of which in 1951 inspired the formulation of a new set of political and penal legislation for the Federal Republic. "Penal law," as conceived by Roland Freisler in the 1930s, "shifts the arena of struggle forward;" the state will "move the lines of defense forward, without first waiting for the criminal to realize his purpose."[40] Fifteen years later, the first minister of justice of the Federal Republic formulated the following thought: "enemies of the state" should be "met and neutralized, before they can move into action."[41]

In the area of legal censorship, too, the highest courts in the land, the Supreme Court and the Constitution Court, have established guidelines. Accordingly, "opinions dangerous to the state" must be legally prosecuted, "for the sake of the whole.... Freedom of opinion is plainly constitutive of the liberal order. If this basic right is to be subordinated, then this may only be done if it can be justified by the special requirements of this order."[42] Due to the time required for full-scale trials, it is neither possible nor desirable to mobilize the prosecuting attorney's office against any and every political utterance. Instead, it is a matter of censoring words and writings which could have practical political consequences, i.e., not simply expressions of opinion but rather potential calls to action, particularly if the problems and possible solutions of a concrete context are pointed out — in short, words that are not merely words. According to the Supreme Court's interpretation, the criterion for the legal prosecution of words, pictures, writings, etc., is whether these expressions are "broadly directed toward specific objectives."[43]

Against this background it is no coincidence that, particularly in recent months, debates over the legitimacy of state violence and non-state violence are increasingly meeting legal obstructions, i.e., they are declared illegal. In official terms, the question of force is to be decisively settled by recourse to the

39. Court of Berlin, resolution of May 10, 1978 (2AR 372-77—4Ws76-78), pp. 4, 18ff.

40. R. Freisler, "Das neue Strafrecht als nationalsozialistisches Bekenntnis," in F. Gürtner and R. Freisler, *Das neue Strafrecht* (Berlin, 1936), p. 136; and R. Dahm, "Verrat und Verbrechen," in *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft*, 1935, p. 302.

41. Th. Dehler (FDP) *Bundestag*, September 12, 1950, p. 3108; also in Federal Supreme Court Statute 9, 291.

42. Constitution Court decision of January 14, 1969, in BVerfGE, pp. 25, 56ff.

43. Federal Supreme Court statute of July 10, 1974, in DuR, 1974, 434ff. Under the laws of the press and criminal law, the key element of the offense, "dissemination," is to be interpreted in this sense.

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Constitution. The state's reactions have been especially frantic whenever the problem of the necessity and legitimacy of the use of force in political confrontations is raised in connection with the actions of a handful of groups describing themselves as urban guerrillas, or in connection with the anti-nuclear movement. Confiscations and proscriptions of related books and materials, and most recently of an entire printing office, are the hysterical, helpless response of the state to what is evidently an unforgivable breach of a taboo. Violence and terror are indiscriminately equated with each other, and the mere discussion thereof is demonized as "violent" in its effects. Rigorous measures are taken specifically against the literature, which alone could initiate an unobstructed public discussion leading to a fundamental analysis of the escalation of state and anti-state violence. But the call for differentiation and analysis itself attracts sanctioned suspicions and defamations. The catchphrase "sympathizer" and corresponding "wanted" posters against opinions are circulated in order to silence or incriminate anyone who unreservedly embarks on a discussion of the sociopolitical origins of the phenomenon referred to under the heading of terrorism, along with anyone who makes the demand — which can by no means be taken for granted in the Federal Republic — that the state preserve the most elementary civil and human rights even of those who would trample those very rights underfoot.

Self-censorship and unthinking retreat from any aspect of force are to be imposed, foolish forms of self-denial that came to fruition during the German fall of 1977. I can scarcely believe that the West in general has any conception of what has been going on in the Federal Republic in the way of self-censorship, fears of being tainted and political hypocrisy. One must in all likelihood live in the country and experience for oneself the spread of a political climate of conformity and ignorance, which on occasion has assumed the form of a spiritual state of siege: radio and television cut from their programs any broadcasts that deal openly with problems of violence; theaters cancel similar performances — including, almost unbelievably, during the Schleyer kidnapping, a performance of Mozart's "Abduction from the Serail"; publishers terminate their contracts with politically uncomfortable writers and stop the publication of entire series of books; libraries sift out their collections — to give but a few examples. All of this is happening not, as one might expect, because of some special directive from the top, but voluntarily: the state is being met halfway.

State regulation of politically volatile controversies is attempted by means of numerous criminal trials, in which, in addition to the aforementioned slander of the state, intellectual "support of criminal associations" and "condoning" and "advocating" violence are all involved. All of this is sanctioned by legal forms that reflect classic patterns of thought control and German thoroughness. Thus, anyone who "advocates" violence "against the Constitution" — whatever that may mean — by "exhibiting, posting, presenting or otherwise making accessible to the public, producing, purchasing, delivering, storing, advertising, announcing, or recommending" such writings, pictures, films and words as have been qualified in this way, or

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who "undertakes to introduce the latter into the proper jurisdiction of this law or to remove them therefrom" with the intention of "inciting others to commit themselves to efforts against the existence or security of the Federal Republic of Germany or against its basic constitutional principles" — this is the wording of Paragraph 88a of the Penal Code, a grandiose compendium of legal hocus-pocus that may quite possibly be airtight.

This provision, introduced as recently as 1976, itself illustrates the chicanery with which the intensification of security measures is carried out: if it became necessary to justify publicly the new Paragraph 88a by alleging that it forbids general appeals for murder and mayhem — which anyhow was forbidden a long time ago — then the government would secretly let the cat out of the bag. During a recent session of the Parliament's legal committee, the government's representative (who meanwhile has been promoted to judge in the state security council of the Supreme Court, which means that in the final instance it is he who will participate in interpreting Paragraph 88a) presented a revealing catalogue of the punishable forms of advocacy of violence, which should be read thoroughly, especially by those who continue to misunderstand the law as being a "law against terrorism." "In the first place," the government representative declared, the punishable advocacy of violence "takes the form of indirect incitement; secondly, advocacy in the form of merely superficial self-distancing; thirdly, in description of punishable actions, with the effect of encouraging imitation; fourth, by condoning a historical occurrence with the intent of presenting it as an example worthy of emulation; fifth, advocacy in the form of announcing or predicting violent acts, which tends to lead to imitative behavior; and sixth, advocating violence in the form of printing others' opinions, where the author appropriates these opinions in order to produce a particular effect."[44]

The advocacy of violence must allegedly also be prosecuted if violence is "presented as desirable or even as necessary or inevitable,"[45] because "the dissemination of such expressions can promote a readiness, specifically among young people, to regard the use of violence as an acceptable political means."[46] This, however, "is socially damaging and dangerous to the community."[47]

By improving the possibilities for intervention by state prosecuting attorneys, this legislation is designed to maintain the undisputed monopoly of state power, by prosecuting even discussions "at the base" regarding the uses of violence and in this way it can strike at the core of all activities that depend on an open, oppositional preparation and dissemination of ideas as well as on the related support campaigns. Bombings and assassinations, so much discussed during the public debate over the legislation, assuredly do not come

44. Bundestag Special Committee for Penal Law Reform, hereafter cited as "Special Committee," minutes of the meeting of October 2, 1975, p. 2293.

45. Bundestag Document No. 7-3030, p. 8.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

47. Federal Minister of Justice Vogel (SPD), in *Bundestag*, January 16, 1976, p. 14742. On the increase in suggestions of violence, which are not intended seriously, as leading to a more rigorous enforcement of Paragraph 241a of the Penal Code, see Cobler, *op.cit.*

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under this heading: they are not acts of violence that depend for their implementation on a public discussion. On the contrary, the latter would make such acts impossible. On the other hand, there are other activities that stand or fall with public discussion and preparation: for example, strikes, demonstrations and the ecology movement as a whole. Since the legal and popular meanings of "force" or "violence" are as different as day and night (the Supreme Court has even defined passive resistance and strikes as violence in a legal sense), there are no limits on the possible applications of this elastic law. The legal heading is rigorous: it reads "protection of social peace" and thereby identifies the ways and means by which political conflicts are conducted, or rather, suppressed: through the imposition, by force if necessary, of a taboo on the structural class violence that characterizes this society. "Internal peace" and "community" in Germany are key concepts in politics as well as in law. "The production of the peace of the community" — in the legal as well as in the political literature these terms are understood to mean "the security of the common interest," the "stabilization of collective conditions" against "disturbances," which are seen as "shaking the positive, integrative consciousness expressed by trust" of the population, "and in shattering the latter's faith in the essential peacefulness of the social environment."[48] In a word, existing social contradictions and conflicts should not be called by their proper names or be used as themes in a political context — this by the way is the legal position on academic freedom as well. "Precisely in the context of present developments," a deputy argued during consultations on Paragraph 88a, "we must avoid even giving the impression that criminal acts against social peace will be taken lightly."[49]

A law that is designed to protect the state and serves above all to combat opinions and activities that are politically effective because they are realizable and worthy of emulation is clearly aimed at the organized beginnings of an alternative public sphere and opposition: as the chief of the Federal Crime Bureau put it, at "symbols of opposition." The Constitution Court has stressed that political penal law does not apply to individuals "insofar as they pursue and represent particular political goals by themselves.... Their actions become dangerous when they stem from an organization." The defense is directed therefore "not against the actions of the individual as such, but against the related strengthening of the organization" — it is reportedly a matter of "prosecuting ideas in organized form."[50] Paragraphs 129 and 129a of the federal penal code are the most important of the provisions to criminalize organized action. Paragraph 129a, which focuses on "terrorist associations," has only been part of the penal code since 1976. On the other hand, paragraph 129, which covers "the formation and support of criminal associations," has precedents in the 19th century, when their objective was to

48. J. Berkemann, in NJW 1972, p. 1971.

49. Special Committee, September 19, 1975, p. 2246. Censure on scholarship: (a) Lefèvre decision; Indian-June decision, Pestel-Revers; (b) Paragraph 86III, Penal Code; (c) Decision on German Communist Party (Theory-Praxis).

50. Constitution Court Decision 25, p. 57f.

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allow the prosecution of those persons "who seek to transfer public power from the legally empowered government and the estates to other organs, and who through resolutions dangerously influence public opinion."[51] In the 1950s the "criminal associations" of paragraph 129 were defined less broadly as "underground associations," while under the Nazis they were described even more specifically as "alliances hostile to the state." In the Wilhelminian era they were defined as associations acting "counter to the order of the state" or "hindering the state." The unequivocally political purpose of this provision has been preserved despite its many titular changes, along with an almost exclusive use against left-wing organizations — in the Weimar period this occurred to such an extent as to prompt the sarcastic question as to when the entire workers' movement would be declared a "criminal association."

Paragraph 129 had its first heydey in the Federal Republic during the Communist witch-hunt of the 1950s, only to experience a sinister comeback today against the backdrop of the struggle with the RAF and similar groups. This current focus on the application of Paragraphs 129 and 129a of the penal code, as well as their dramatic-sounding specifications, should not be further cause for puzzlement; they cannot disguise the fact that the accusation of "intellectual support" for "criminal or terrorist associations" is made more and more often of anyone who authors, distributes, or even prints politically undesirable writings. Penalties are Draconian.

The unlimited applicability of the provision has recently been demonstrated again by the Supreme Court.[52] Paragraph 129 also applies to those alliances of persons who, "although they have not yet committed any punishable acts, have nevertheless conceived the future commission of punishable acts." It is sufficient that "the members of the organization are unaware that the pursuit of their plans could lead to the commission of serious illegal acts" — a completely incalculable "definition" which at any given time might apply to trade union groups as well as to opponents of nuclear energy or to citizen action groups. The snowball effect of professional proscription makes this apparent. "Support" for organizations defined as criminal is also interpreted with unlimited breadth by the Supreme Court — the "perpetrator" is a supporter if "his or her aid is intrinsically effective and advantageous to the organization."[53]

The investigative procedures legitimated by paragraphs 129 and 129a reveal the degree of arbitrary license which they permit: an accusation under Paragraph 129 provides virtual *carte blanche* to the police and the prosecuting attorney's office because it facilitates and legalizes every house search and confiscation, telephone surveillance, and detention.

The law pertaining to national security is imposed with the aid of procedural regulations that determine the course of political trials as well as their outcome: as a rule the accused is inevitably convicted. According to

51. Goltdammer, *Die Materialien zum Strafgesetzbuche für die preussischen Staaten, aus den amtlichen Quellen nach den Paragraphen des Gesetzbuches zusammengestellt und in einem Kommentar erläutert; Theil II, den Besonderen Theil enthaltend* (1952), p. 67.

52. Federal Supreme Court Statute of December 21, 1977, in NJW 1978, p. 433.

53. Federal Supreme Court Statute 20, 89.

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Parliament, the implementation of such procedures themselves is a question of general prevention, that is, of intimidation and deterrence.[54] In the last few years, certain significant changes in criminal trial procedures and in the structure of the judiciary have considerably extended the power of the prosecution at the expense of defendants and accused. Criminal trial procedure is surreptitiously being turned into police trial procedure. Such an extension of the prosecution's competence poses no problem in the federal government's view, since the prosecution "demonstrably makes fair and correct use of the rights conceded to them." The restraint traditionally exercised in this area was allegedly due to a historically conditioned bias, a "suspicion on the part of the legislature of 1877 toward the then-nascent state prosecuting attorney's office," a bias that a hundred years of experience with this office has "proven to be unfounded."[55] With this structurally and historically blind argument, the prosecution has now formally come to dominate the trial procedure, as in fact it has always done — at least in political trials.

The government openly admitted that the smooth running of the Stammheim trial had become a matter of political prestige. "It is clear to the initiated," explained a Social Democratic representative, "that, without the procedural changes which have been made, the trial of the Baader-Meinhof terrorists would have encountered even greater difficulties, and might even have had to be cut short.... I therefore ask all critics to consider for a moment the generally disastrous effect on our citizens' sense of justice if the criminal proceedings in Stammheim had been brought to an inconclusive end."[56] *A priori* public condemnation exacted its price.

Of the numerous legal changes, only those regulations that affect the defense attorneys need to be mentioned here. There exists as well newly constituted possibilities for actually trying someone on charges of major felonies in the absence of the accused. Such far-reaching abridgement of due process existed in Germany only in the Third Reich; it never occurred to anyone, nor could it ever have been possible, to carry on trials *in absentia* against the countless Nazi criminals who have been successfully avoiding prosecution, on the grounds of "illness," for more than 30 years.

The right to an unimpeded defense precisely in the case of political offenses — one of the achievements of the bourgeois revolution — has now been abridged beyond recognition. Defense attorneys who venture to claim the rights of due process for their defendants are not infrequently simply identified with the prosecution's accusations; they are excluded one after another from political trials, and the proceedings are then carried out for the sake of appearances before a puppet cabinet of lawyers appointed by the court. "Justice must look like justice," commented the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.[57] "Free advocacy" had become a farce, and political

54. Eyrich (CDU), *Bundestag*, January 16, 1976, p. 14753.
55. Draft legislation of the Federal Government for the reform of criminal procedure in Bundestag Document No. 7-551, p. 75, p. 38.
56. Gnädiger (SPD), *Bundestag*, June 24, 1977, p. 17990.
57. FAZ, June 9, 1975, p. 8.

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defense has become an unofficially punishable "offense." The trials of Croissant and Groenewold, which were also followed with great interest in the foreign press, are not the only ones in which lawyers are threatened with disbarment because of their defense activities.

The effects of this procedural ground clearing hit the accused and convicts particularly hard. For, as nowhere else, infringements of civil liberties and human rights are made more drastically and experienced more acutely by those affected in the courts and behind bars. The accused who, because of political opposition, commit a double breach of norms, by disregarding the prevailing laws as well as the rules according to which they are to be held to account, are exposed to especially difficult conditions in the prisons of the Federal Republic. They are normally strictly isolated, hermetically cut off from other prisoners. Visitation and correspondence rights are limited and closely supervised. According to the research of a psychiatrist, Professor Rasch, "one must imagine the situation in Stammheim as being like a bell jar. It is as if everything is closed off until one suffocates."[58] It is well known in social medicine and social psychology that such isolation strikes the human being exposed to it in the center of his personality, as a social being. It is torture — not through impositions, but by deprivation.

Solitary confinement and its severe physical and psychic consequences have been attacked for many years; some of those who complained publicly and demanded its abolition were tried for slandering the state. Only after the prison doctor at Stammheim conceded the fact that severe social isolation was the lot of the accused and condemned confined there, admitting that he had never seen harder confinement conditions in his 20 years as a prison doctor,[59] did the Stammheim court agree to an investigation of the prisoners. Professionals commissioned by the court came independently to the unsurprising conclusion that the organic and psychic illnesses ascertained in the accused were due primarily to the conditions of their confinement. It was recommended that the strict practice of isolation be ended immediately.[60]

Nothing of the kind occurred: the Supreme Court and the Constitution Court had the last word here as well. As the Supreme Court put it, the considerable consequences to the health of those subjected to "isolating conditions of confinement" were not disputed. But, the court continued, prisoners had only themselves to blame: they had forced the state to apply such measures in the first place. Supposedly these are defendants who are "out of the ordinary," who "refuse to give any recognition to the organs of state," who would continue to pursue their political objectives even in confinement, who "fail to indicate that they wish to participate in the proceedings as accused, who resist being condemned" — precisely, they "resist being condemned." Allegedly no other decision is possible: "The sense

58. Prof. W. Rasch in an interview in *Stern* magazine, May 20, 1976, p. 74.
59. *Frankfurter Rundschau*, June 13, 1975, p. 2.
60. Excerpts from this expert opinion are found in Cobler, *op.cit.*, pp. 158ff. On the general problem area, see W. Rasch, "Die Gestaltung der Haftbedingungen politsch motivierter Täter in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in *Monatsschrift für Kriminologie und Strafrechtsreform*, June 1976, p. 61ff.

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of justice of the law-abiding population...would otherwise be incalculably damaged."[61] The court confirmed the constitutional correctness of this disarming conclusion in a few lines and went on to interpret the constitution further: the principle of the state under the rule of law requires "upholding a functionally effective administration of penal law."[62] In this way, a new constitutional law has been established: the abolition of the principle of the absolute validity of basic human rights as guarantees that take precedence over state interests, no matter how grave the accusation against the individual. The new "rule of law" becomes a trap: opportunistic appeals to the sense of justice of a law-abiding population and the absurd claim for constitutional duty to ensure "functionally effective administration of penal law" with all the political consequences attendant thereon, transform the legal state into a shadowy "state under the rule of justice": the justice of formal juridical procedure, the only determinant of the classical state under the rule of law, is inverted into a justice of results.[63]

Finally, when the law barring contact between defense attorneys and their clients was enacted and then confirmed by the Constitution Court, solitary confinment was definitively legalized and the transformation of the state sketched out above was brought to its culmination: the blocked contact law totally isolates prisoners affected by it. All contact with other prisoners is prohibited, and it is forbidden to write or receive letters, to have access to newspapers, to own a radio, or to communicate, even by correspondence, with one's defense attorney. The reduction of the individual to an object is complete: the prisoner is at the mercy of the institution, and has no protection by attorney or public.

With these measures, conditions of confinement under the blocked contact law exceed the previously imposed tactic of isolation. As far as the Constitution Court is concerned, that has no significance: in early August 1978, the regulations were unanimously found to be in accordance with the constitution. These undisputed infringements upon basic human rights are to be "tolerated" under certain conditions "in the interests of overriding societal values...in the interests of the self-preservation of the state."[64] The fact that the circumstances under which human rights are to be suspended are determined by the executive did not appear problematic to the Supreme Court: the court laconically refers too "the commentary by the federal minister of justice in which he convincingly argues the need — beyond concrete cases — for such regulations."[65]

61. Federal Supreme Court Statute of October 22, 1975, in JZ 1976, 763ff, confirmed by the Federal Constitutional Court on January 21, 1976, in JZ 1976, 766. On these crucial decisions see the commentary by G. Grünwald, in JZ, *op.cit.*

62. On the transition from a "state of laws" to a value-based "state of justice" through the rule of National Socialism, cf. C. Schmitt, "Nationalsozialismus und Rechsstaat," in JW 1934, 713ff. This devastating but influential theory of the highest court contributed under Nazism not only to administrative isolation, but also to public justification of it. Cf. above all the essay by Minister of Justice Vogel (SPD), "Strafverfahrensrecht und Territorismus — eine Bilanz" in NJW, 1978, 1218 f.

63. Federal Constitutional Court Decision, August 1, 1978 (2BcR 1013-77), p. 41.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

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The court has unceremoniously raised national security to a constitutional value, in the face of which basic rights apparently then have only secondary validity. The inversion is complete: basic laws to protect the rights of citizens have become laws to protect the state.

All these measures, considered in their entirety, indicate the dissolution of those constitutional limitations to state power that mark the difference between a constitutional state and a police state. "The constitutional state is being adapted to the concrete situation,"[66] as the minister of justice pointedly describes the process in which freedoms are, step by step, "adapted" and placed at the disposition of the state. As usual in this country, this proceeds in accordance with strict rules: even the erosion of civil and human rights is accomplished legally — injustice is served by the appearance of formal legality. Without a doubt, it is this legalistic mimicry which facilitates the public justification of the various "security" measures. Since these laws are passed in Parliament, their content, substance, and thus their political consequences are rarely considered. The "crises" and "emergencies" that are simultaneously conjured up for purposes of appeasement are standardized and thus normalized. They become everyday occurrences. The exception becomes the rule, the "security" mentality becomes a doctrine, and state rationale becomes a generally binding political creed that justifies everything. The common thread through all this is the legalized deprivation of rights.

As shown repeatedly, this happens with the help of the judicial system. The executive's break with the law is declared to be in genuine adherence to the norm. The courts, above all the Supreme Court and the Constitution Court, thus become institutionalized instruments of both legitimation and legalization. The separation of powers emerges as a more or less routine division of labor between the judicial and the executive branches in order to assure mutual legitimacy and legality.

Even in the legislature, there is increasing after-the-fact legalization of illegal activity by the state; the break with established law becomes law. If worst comes to worst, the government and the judiciary take recourse to the "supra-legal state of emergency," an unlimited reserve for action and legality that places the entire legal system at the executive's disposal. Former Attorney General Buback made no bones about this practice. Asked if he considered proposals to expand the authority of his office necessary and reasonable, he casually replied, "If you have a legal stipulation and try to stretch it on occasion, it usually doesn't work.... The protection of the state is based on the fact that it is undertaken by people who actively support the state. And people who are active, like (the president of the Federal Criminal Bureau) Herold and I, always find a way."[67]

This procedure is impressively demonstrated by the emergence of the blocked contact law. After Schleyer's kidnapping, the federal minister of justice along with the state ministers of justice ordered the total isolation of

66. Federal Minister of Justice Vogel (SPD), in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, May 9, 1975, p. 1. Ditto Vogel in the article cited from NJW 1978, 1221.

67. S. Buback in an interview in *Der Spiegel*, February 16, 1976, p. 34.

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approximately 100 political delinquents in different prisons. It was clear to those responsible that this executive decree openly broke with the law. For this reason, they proclaimed a "supra-legal state of emergency," referred to as a "state emergency exceeding the boundaries of law." According to the authorities, the total isolation of all political delinquents was necessary "until the conclusion of the kidnapping case" because "it must be feared that without such measures, forbidden news would be exchanged between the abductors and the prisoners."[68] Aside from the fact that there was in effect no concrete proof or even indication to justify this assumption, the measure was absolutely pointless. If the government had really been concerned about Schleyer's life and health, why didn't it meet his kidnappers' demands? After all, they had not kidnapped the industrialist to murder him, but rather, to exchange him. Solely in the interest of state rationale, the government stood firm, rights of uninvolved third parties were violated, and Schleyer's life, concretely threatened, was endangered and finally sacrificed.[69]

Several judges to whom the defense lawyers of the isolated prisoners appealed pronounced the government to be in open violation of the law, but the authorities did not let that hinder their efforts. The "independence of the judiciary" was understood as executive independence *from* the judiciary. The Supreme Court finally annulled the refractory decisions of a few lower courts and gave the government free rein to bend the law. Subsequently, some lawyers turned to the Constitution Court and, as could be expected, the government took the offensive:[70] A "major crisis staff" declared itself an emergency executive body and brought the blocked contact law before Parliament. As we have since learned, the fundamentals of this law had been prepared much earlier.[71] Apparently, it was not until the Schleyer kidnapping that it seemed feasible to get such a far-reaching law passed. Time was of the essence, and the opportunity of the moment was not missed. According to the minister of justice, "if judicial decisions and executive actions in individual cases are not in agreement, this situation must be changed as quickly as possible."[72] Things were changed as quickly as possible, and the annoying hole was closed. The crisis staff had its law approved by Parliament and the parliamentary council within 72 hours in a "night and fog" action with no substantial possibility for public control or influence. The

68. *Bulletin* of the Bureau of the Press and Information of the Federal Government, September 20, 1977, p. 820.

69. The constitutional court to which the Schleyer family appealed against this policy of the state conceded primacy to the *raison d'état* (Federal Constitutional Court Decision of October 16, 1977, in NJW 1977, p. 2235).

70. Compare the decisions in NJW 1977, 2172ff, 2177, as well as the discussion on the Federal Supreme Court Decision concerning "supra-legal states of emergency" in NJW 1978, 623ff.

71. The government later admitted that the law for the isolation of prisoners was not formulated spontaneously: cf. Informations- und Presseamt der Bundesregierung, ed., "Dokumentation zu den Ereignissen und Entscheidungen im Zusammenhang mit der Entführung Hanns Martin Schleyers und der Lufthansa-Maschine 'Landshut,' " November 1977 (Bonn), part 6, and Bundesministerium der Justiz, ed., "Kontaktsperre — Informationen über ein Gesetz zur Bekämpfung des Terrorismus," April 1978 (Bonn), p. 24.

72. Vogel (SPD), *Bundesrat,* September 30, 1977, p. 227.

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text of the law was not even available to an outsider before its passage, and the news ban decreed by the government posed additional difficulties to the public. The four legislators who refused to approve the law were subject to pressure and insult. As shown, a year later this legislative procedure and its product were granted constitutional "consecration."

The origin and content of this important regulation with such a harmless-sounding name are reminiscent of the emergency decrees of the Weimar period, which, as is well known, paved the way for fascism. As a norm which empowers the executive, the new legal standard is measured solely in terms of political and police expediency. This law, which may amount to the state's version of seizing hostages, removes all restrictions on national security authorities who may now "after appropriate consideration," declare the civil rights of selected prisoners invalid for an extended length of time. However, not just prisoners are affected; this law allows for arrests on the basis of a quickly constructed suspicion of "supporting a terrorist organization." *Persons thus arrested could rarely defend themselves with a lawyer of their* choice.

The blocked contact law is typical of a political development in which the "law and order" mentality becomes an everyday phenomenon. Norms determined by police mentality and tactics are used to conduct political debates or prevent them: order, decree, subjugation, security, and prevention. Police conflict strategies are invoked in order to defend "normalcy" against any deviant political behavior, and it is police institutions that define what "order" is and who "disrupts" it, based solely on the logic of combating an enemy. The orientation to such one-dimensional concepts increasingly dictates the contents and the process of legalization. Thus, the limitations to state power that the constitution and due process once guarded are now undermined by the general clauses of the new police law in the interest of a "general resistance to danger." Those limitations, apparently regarded as merely optical shortcomings, are currently being circumvented by simply adapting due process to police practice. The revision of trial procedure is — according to the working title — "harmonized." Thus, the new censorship law (Paragraphs 88a, 130a, 140) is oriented to the establishment of police regulations. Words and writings that are "suited" to disrupting the public peace are criminalized. Similarly the blocked contact law hinges on "appropriate consideration," one of the central concepts of the police law. With an eye to anti-nuclear activities, a new concept of the right to assemble and demonstrate is called for, one that corresponds to police demands — "as prerequisite for the reinstatement of public peace and the execution of state policy."[73]

Procedure guarantees that the positions and demands of the police are not only heard, but also heeded. With their deformed understanding of politics, police experts dominate the work in the Ministry of the Interior and related parliamentary committees. More and more clearly, this work focuses on

73. Bundestag Document No. 8-322 of April 26, 1977, p. 1.

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pushing through and riding out political decisions once they are made, if necessary with police force. The police have long since exchanged their merely instrumental role of bailiff for one of a political force that defines the law. The Conference of the Interior Ministers of the various states and the crisis staffs play particularly important roles in this development. Neither institution is mentioned in the constitution; therefore, neither is subject to any type of control. In the Interior Ministery Conference, "common efforts to achieve security are undertaken which are all the more effective because they are scarcely perceptible to the public.... Although occasionally criticized, this conference discusses more than is openly transacted, and we have no intention of changing this.... (It is) not the task of the political leadership to replace the experts. It is up to us, as those politically responsible, to give the necessary push to whatever the experts consider appropriate as long as it is legally possible."[74] The impetus for the decisive domestic measures of recent years, from professional proscription to stricter criminal law to the perfection of police authority, stemmed from this shadow cabinet of police officials.

To the extent that police "assessment of the situation" became the decisive criterion for political decisions, citizens are perceived only as potential intruders and suspects. Suspicion is generalized, and surveillance finally becomes total. The president of the Federal Criminal Bureau has designed a disturbing, overall concept: "Of all state bureaus the police force is confronted most directly and genuinely by reality. As such, it has a unique claim to knowledge; it is privy to insights into a multitude and variety of socially deviant behavior patterns opposed to society, as well as into structural defects of society and patterns of mass behavior." Accordingly, it is in a position to recognize "subconscious changes" quickly, and it must transform itself "from a mere tool of execution, subjugated to another power, into a motivating force for social changes." This requires a "decisive rejection of the confinement to its traditional functions, a radically new intellectual beginning, a completely different self-understanding." "The police of the future will be different, on a higher plane, with a socially hygienic task."[75]

74. Genscher (Free Democratic Party) and Ruhnau (SPD), *Bundestag,* June 7, 1972, p. 10976 and p. 10998. Police experts nevertheless complain of further costly delays, claiming that problems are being "talked to death" in committees and parliaments. "The treatment of details which follows the determination of the general goal...often costs a lot of time, leads to shifting of priorities and progressively weakens the desired measures. Consider the painstaking consideration of many bills, of which the...once massively supported intention is pushed aside in the course of procedure by other considerations." A. Stümper, "Probleme der polizeilichen Führung in unserer Zeit," *Die Polizei,* No. 11 (1975), p. 366. The Social Democrat vice president of the German *Bundestag,* Schmitt-Vockenhausen, voiced support of a general redefinition of the duties of parliamentary committees. "Ways must be found to free the Legislature, i.e., the *Bundestag* and its members, from occupying itself with those numerous laws which deal merely with administration and which basically belong to the responsibilities of the executive." He suggested "consideration of the many ways in which authority could be expanded for the issuance of executive orders and decrees. This expanded authority could be limited inasmuch as the legislature would retain the standing right to review executive decrees, and, at least within a certain time, even to overturn them and address a question itself." H. Schmitt-Vockenhausen (SPD), "Die Zeit der Paulskirche ist vorbei," in *Frankfurter Rundschau,* January 1, 1976, p. 14.

75. H. Herold, "Gesellschaftlicher Wandel —Chance der Polizei" in H. Schäfer, ed., *Grundlagen der Kriminalistik,* Vol. II (Hamburg, 1973), p. 13ff. Also H. Herold, "Künftige

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It would be too simple to interpret the national security measures of the Federal Republic exclusively as a comprehensive internal deterrent. Rather, the federal government is proving itself conscious of its role in Europe as well. The resources devoted to maintaining this "Watch on the Rhine" are justified by the special meaning that the political stability of this state has for the stability of European capitalism in general. "The Federal Republic," according to the Christian Democrat Degger, a member of Parliament, is the "strongest bulwark of free Europe.... If the Federal Republic falls, then the rest of the free states of Europe will follow. Lenin's statement, 'Whoever has Germany, has Europe,' is more valid now than at the time it was made."[76]

The measures taken by this state have typically German characteristics. Their perfectionism and rigidity reflect the fear of change which has always marked political life in this country, and which may always be invoked, especially in times of crisis. All the proposed regulations sketched here are not simply to be traced to "the development of capitalism." Rather, this is the German way of dealing with this problem. It is this over-reaction and "overcompensation" which Oskar Negt cited in his essay aptly titled, "Why the Germans Have no Marseillaise." They have none, because they could imagine "storming the Bastille" only in a nightmare. It is also because freedoms are never radically defended in this country, let alone demanded. Instead, they were bestowed — to the extent that they exist at all — in the latest instance by the Allies after the liberation from fascism, which is revealingly referred to in general as "the Collapse."

The German way of dealing with crises has a history. It is the history of a lack of bourgeois democratic identity, of a lack of a liberal public sphere and a militant labor movement, and at the same time the history of a superabundant belief in authority and subservience. This historical mortgage weighs upon the political conduct of the citizens of this land, as do the forms of working out political contradictions. There has always been great skill for throwing out the baby with the bathwater — and usually others have had to face the consequences. Great pains have always been taken to establish and maintain the legitimation and "values" of a state monopoly of power, or to replace them with directives, laws and sanctions, since it has become more and more difficult to bind them to the reality of this state itself. Political conflicts have always been reduced to problems best "cleaned up" by the police. A radical break with this tradition has never been achieved. The tradition reaches far back in time before the twelve years of National Socialism when terrorism was state policy. How could all that vanish at once in 1945, when so many personal, structural, and ideological bridges to that tradition remain?

One must keep the history of this land in mind, a land in which "new beginning" has always in a way meant "starting over" and where political obscurantism was always "trump." One must know what one can expect in a

Einsatzformen der EDV und ihre Auswirkungen im Bereich der Polizei," in *Kriminalistik*, No. 9 (1974), p. 232.

76. Dregger (CDU), *Bundestag*, October 28, 1977, p. 4099.

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Germany which seems to be catastrophe-prone and why resistance cannot be counted on for the moment, since even in the trade unions the lessons of the development toward fascism are still suppressed.

In the populace, as far as this abstraction even applies, the entire realm of security is regarded more or less indifferently, because it has yet to alter anything in the daily life of an "average citizen" directly. The importance assigned to the theme of internal security rises according to need and the corresponding preparation by the media only to be displaced quickly by other problems. Here as well, everything is delegated "to the authorities." Further infringement of their civil rights meets little resistance among the citizens, perhaps because rights are not even recognized as such. Those actually affected do not feel involved.

Only political dreamers still expect a change of direction from the Social Democratic Party, which by its own declaration "feels at home in its state for the first time."[77] After all, it is a largely social democratic administration that has been trying for years to disguise and streamline the legal erosion of basic human rights. Willy Brandt's words — "unless one forgets history or denies it, it is clear that freedom and justice in this land could not survive long if social democracy should become weak"[78] — are a mere mockery. The almost routine lamentation about the supposedly "unfortunate role of the SPD" in this connection *forgets that this party never* took on a role that it was not eager to perform. The SPD is not a pitiable victim of this policy: it consciously pursues it. Surely the SPD stands more than ever with its back to the wall, but its hands are free and it knows how to use them. It actively assisted in starting the stones rolling that could someday bury it, since they have turned into an avalanche. The security measures are beginning to develop a dynamic and life of their own, which resemble that of their creators. From the sheltered fortresses of their offices, they experience social reality through a "rifle-slit" perspective, and remodel it accordingly. Hence the exaggeration and immeasurably distorted proportions with which the uncontestably horrifying actions of a few desperados are depicted. These individuals, like their counterparts on the side of the state, have lost all sense of proportion, all safety valves have been destroyed.

77. Executive leadership of the SPD, cited in *Handelsblatt,* February 24, 1975, p. 1.
78. W. Brandt, in a speech during the award of the Gustav Heinemann Prize, in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, May 28, 1977, p. 14.

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# AN AESTHETIC OF REDEMPTION: BENJAMIN'S PATH TO *TRAUERSPIEL*

by Richard Wolin

In his seminal essay on Benjamin, Habermas distinguishes between ideology critique — the confrontation of an illusory truth claim with the reality underlying it — as employed by Adorno and Marcuse, and redemptive critique, preferred by Benjamin, a type of criticism that relates conservatively rather than critically to its object. As Habermas explains: "While Marcuse would like to prepare for the transformation of demystified material conditions of life through the analytical destruction of an objective illusion [in bourgeois works of art] and in this way accomplish the *Aufhebung* of culture (in which these conditions are stabilized), Benjamin does not see his task in an attack on art, which is already understood as being in a stage of decomposition. His criticism of art relates to its objects conservatively, whether it is a question of baroque *Trauerspiel*, Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal*, or Soviet film of the early 1920s. It aims to be sure at the 'mortification of the works';[1] however, criticism effects a mortification of the work of art only in order to transpose it from the medium of beauty to the medium of truth — and thereby *to redeem* it."[2]

1. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (London, 1977), p. 182. Hereafter cited as GTD. In addition, the following abbreviations have been used throughout the text for works by Benjamin: GS for *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt, 1974); Br. for *Briefe*, Gershom Scholem and T.W. Adorno, eds. (Frankfurt, 1966); I for *Illuminations* (New York, 1969); R for *Reflections* (New York, 1978).

2. Jürgen Habermas, "Bewusstmachende oder rettende Kritik — die Aktualität Walter Benjamins" in *Zur Aktualität Walter Benjamins*, Siegfried Unseld, ed. (Frankfurt, 1972), pp. 175-223. This study has recently been translated in *New German Critique* 17 (Spring 1979), a "Special Walter Benjamin Issue." However, it is preceded by an introduction by P. Brewster and C.H. Buchner that is highly misleading, not to mention grossly misinformed. The object of this introduction is to show how Habermas has misunderstood Benjamin's later philosophy of language as it is expressed in the 1933 fragment "On the Mimetic Faculty." Whereas Habermas attempts to interpret Benjamin's later mimetic theory of language in terms of the latter's earlier Messianic philosophy of language (elaborated in the 1916 essay "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man"), and thereby assimilate it to the theological notion of "redemptive critique," the authors of the introduction want to show how Benjamin's theory is actually some kind of disguised Marxism. Thus they conclude, "Mimesis is for Benjamin a *technical* act of human production — human praxis" (p. 23). This notion is so far-fetched that it would not merit comment, if it were not for the fact that it is likely to prejudice the credibility of Habermas' fine essay. In truth, the Benjamin fragment makes absolutely *no use* of the concept of *techné* (though the authors attempt surreptitiously to smuggle in a quote from the notes to Benjamin's avowedly Marxist "The Work of Art" essay, written two years later, in support of their claim), but when properly understood represents an attempt by Benjamin to base the earlier theological theory on a universalizable, *anthropological* foundation, in keeping with his endeavor in the 1930s to part with his early conception of esoteric criticism. By man's capacity "to produce" similarities, all Benjamin means is his ability to copy or mimic nature. The reason the diminution of this capacity in modern times is so serious is that it represents an index of our separation from an original, harmonious state of reconciliation with nature; and the recapturing of this relation (on

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The last sentence conveys the quintessence of Benjamin's conception of art criticism. At issue is a *metaphysics of redemption*: through the "mortification" of the work of art as an autonomous, independent entity accomplished by the philosophical insight of the critic, the "dead," historical, "material content" of the work of art is mediated to the point where its truth content bursts forth and its link to the realm of redeemed life is thereby revealed. This unique methodological self-understanding is developed in the introductory remarks to Benjamin's 1922 essay on Goethe's *Elective Affinities:* "Material and truth content, united in the work's early period, become separated from one another in the course of time; for if the latter always keeps itself hidden, the former protrudes. As time goes on the interpretation of surprising and estranging elements, of the material content, consequently becomes a precondition for every later critic. One can compare this phenomenon with a paleographer before a piece of parchment, whose faded text is covered with traits of a more visible script related to it. Just as the paleographer must begin by reading the later script, so the critic can only begin by commentary [on the material content]. And from the outset, from it there originates for him an invaluable criterion for his judgment: only in this way can the fundamental question of criticism be posed: whether the appearance of the truth content is attributable to the material content or the life of the material content is attributable to the truth content. For in the measure that they dissociate themselves from one another in the work they determine its immortality" (GS I-1, p. 125).

The distinction between material content and truth content thus concerns the paradoxical fact that works of art originate in a determinate, fleeting moment in time, yet nevertheless transcend that point of origin to reveal something supra-historical, an image of truth. The constantly fluctuating historical relation between these two moments accounts for the enigma of

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a higher 'civilized' plane) would constitute a prerequisite for emancipation. It is indeed, just as Habermas says, a question of redeeming *a lost 'semantic potential,'* namely, the potential or capacity to perceive nature as a "kindred spirit" or partner, rather than as an object of technical mastery. As such, the theme of "On the Mimetic Faculty" reappears in the theory of "correspondences" outlined in "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (1939), where Benjamin defines the aura of an object as its "capacity to return the gaze"; it is thus the restoration of a humanized *fraternal* relation to the objects, a capacity which has through the ages been preserved in the mimetic faculty, which Benjamin considers of supreme value. The utilitarian notion of praxis through social labor is the complete *opposite* of what Benjamin intends. For labor relates to objects *manipulatively*; mimesis views them *fraternally*. In "On the Mimetic Faculty," *language*' is viewed as the historical repository of our atrophied capacity to become similar to things (R, 335). Thus, it is precisely a question of lost semantic potentials and nothing else. For Brewster and Buchner to miss something so essential and obvious goes beyond the question of "misunderstanding" and suggests the charge of willful distortion. Finally, to confirm the relationship of "On the Mimetic Faculty" and Benjamin's early theological philosophy of language, one need only peruse the former's first draft, the "Doctrine of the Similar," translated in the same issue of *New German Critique*. Indeed, Rabinbach's introduction (pp. 60-64) makes this link undeniably clear. Cf. also Hans Heinz Holz's essay "Philosophie als Interpretation" (*Alternative*, 56-57, October-December 1967, pp. 235-242), which shows unmistakably how "On the Mimetic Faculty" represents an attempt to recast the 1916 essay "On Language" in an anthropological framework by substituting an onomatapoetic theory of the origin of language for the earlier theological theory that views the origin of language in terms of the "creative word" of God.

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every work of art which the critic always confronts initially: namely, the *Scien des Scheinlosens*, the appearance of that which cannot appear, the emergence of something infinite, the truth, from something that is man-made and finite, a work of art.

In a letter to Scholem in January 1930, Benjamin announced his great hope: "to be considered the greatest German literary critic" (BR, 505). Yet, to interpret this seemingly straightforward remark in light of contemporary conceptions of literary criticism would be misleading. For according to Benjamin's reconceptualization of this dying genre, criticism becomes *the metaphysical point of convergence between the domains of art, religion, and philosophy*. Though each of these spheres ultimately treats the same object, it is only from the sovereign perspective of the critic that the essential unity of all three vantage points can be grasped. For if art concerns itself with life, if philosophy seeks out truth, and religion inquires into the meaning of God (or what is the same, this meaning for us: salvation), then criticism, beginning with art as its object and by way of the mediation of philosophical insight, establishes the ultimate link with that realm with which mere life in its immediacy can have no contact: *the realm of redeemed life*. A relentless desire for redemption is the inner drive behind Benjamin's theoretical *ouevre* (Marxist as well as non-Marxist); a drive that became all the more fervid the more history seemed to conspire against the realization of this goal. The *Trauerspiel* study represents the fulfillment of his search for a suitable object and critical methodology. For Benjamin *Trauerspiel* is much more than a literary genre. Under the transformative power of his critical gaze, it becomes an idea.

*Experience, Kabbalah and Language*

Benjamin's project can be situated in the context of similar efforts to break out of the crisis of Western civilization, a crisis whose severity was driven home in an apocalyptical manner with the horrors of World War I. The kindred spirits who immediately come to mind are Bloch and Lukacs; but the phenomenological movement developed from a similar impetus. If Benjamin never felt compelled to deal with phenomenology, the ties with Bloch and Lukacs are highly instructive. Although each selected a different route, the fact that they shared a common goal is evidenced by the virtually identical guiding conceptual principles around which the theoretical endeavors turn in each case: totality (Lukacs), utopia (Bloch), and redemption (Benjamin). In the intellectual context of WWI Germany, the common theoretical enemy was neo-Kantianism. Their deeply rooted opposition was based on Kant's ban on thinking the absolute, as well as the stigma with which he branded any thought that dare overstep the boundaries of the world given to us in sensible intuition.[3]

Thus, it is not coincidental that Bloch, Lukacs and Benjamin looked toward art in their search for a resolution to the cultural crisis. For the

3. For a more dialectical and less damning appraisal of the neo-Kantian tradition, see Andrew Arato, "The Neo-Idealist Defense of Subjectivity," *Telos* 21 (Fall 1974), pp. 108-164.

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attempt to embody the idea of a non-degraded, spiritual totality evinced in authentic works of art places them in the forefront of the utopian impulses of thought. In the context of the neo-Kantian climate at this time, works of art appeared as the living refutation of the Kantian proscription against meanderings in the intelligible realm, against his claim that the concepts of our understanding "would mean nothing, were they not always able to present their meanings in apperances, that is, in empirical objects."[4] For works of art overreach the Kantian barrier of the "objects of possible experience" and present meaningful and enlightening judgments about objective reality — judgments often more valid than the scientific judgments Kant sought to emulate, even if they do not lend themselves as readily to empiricist criteria of verification.

It was by way of an early confrontation with Kant's theory of knowledge that Benjamin first came to formulate the outlines of his own philosophical project. In "Ueber das Programm der kommenden Philosophie" (1918), Benjamin adhered to the (to be sure, short-lived) conviction that the tasks of philosophy could still be accomplished with traditional philosophy. The rehabilitation of the ideal of philosophy as doctrine was to be achieved through the critical transcendence of Kantian thought. As Benjamin states: "The central task of the coming philosophy is, beginning from the most profound presentiments that it borrows from its age and from the anticipation of its great future, to allow these to accede to knowledge through an examination of their relation to the Kantian system" (GS II-1, p. 157). What he seeks thereby is the "epistemological establishment of a superior concept of experience according to the typology of Kantian thinking" (GS II-1, p. 160).

Kant sought to establish the lasting, a-temporal value of knowledge in the face of the temporal nature of its objects. For Benjamin, this selection of an inferior object domain proved his undoing. To provide a universal and necessary basis for the traditional concept of truth, *adequatio intellectus et rei*, would merely result in a valueless concept of experience: "That Kant could commence his immense work under the sign of the Enlightenment means that it was undertaken on the basis of an experience reduced to a nadir, to a minimum of signification, so to speak" (GS II-1, 159). Kant's error was his uncritical acceptance of the epistemological standard of his epoch: the concept of reality advanced by the empirical sciences — "a reality of an inferior rank" (GS II-1, 158). Of course Kant believed that any legitimate idea of experience had to be based on Newtonian physics. For Benjamin, the world view of the Enlightenment which originated from these foundations "was one of the most base experiences or views of the world" (GS II-1, 159).

The ultra-skeptical philosophical consciousness of the Enlightenment ultimately backfires, however. Its initially progressive concern with interrogating all dogma, superstition, and false absolutes eventually supplants such illusions with one of its own: the belief that the only true knowledge is

4. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (London, 1970), A240, B299.

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empirically measurable knowledge. The defeat of rationalism simultaneously resulted in the banishment of the ultimate questions of human existence from the purview of acceptable theoretical discourse. The death knell of metaphysics reverberates in the First Critique when Kant formulated the central problem of theoretical reason in terms of the seemingly innocent question, "How is pure mathematics possible?"[5] The recent success of mathematics and natural science, Kant recommends, "should incline us, at least by way of experiment, to imitate their procedure, so far as the analogy which, as a species of rational knowledge, they bear to metaphysics will permit."[6] The reduction of reason to a handmaiden of the natural sciences and the ban on utopian thinking (inasmuch as ideas of reason are relegated to the domain of dialectical illusion or the supersensible "intelligible world") are the impulses behind Benjamin's harsh characterization of Enlightenment thought as "one of the most base." Benjamin saw the methodological inability of neo-Kantian thought to go beyond the given world of facts, the mood of impotent resignation with which it observed a world clearly headed for disaster (one need only think of Simmel's "tragedy of culture" or Weber's "iron cage") as the contemporary manifestations of this heritage.

Another deficiency of the Kantian theory of knowledge was its radical subjectivism. For Kant's belief in the sovereign nature of the transcendental consciousness greatly impoverishes his discussion of truth. For Benjamin, truth is something *objective* and *divine* in origin, which exists prior to the abstract synthesizing activities of the transcendental subject. The inviolable primacy of the transcendental subject prevents Kant's a priori from gaining insight into the objective structure of things themselves. The categories, with the help of their underlying unity, the "transcendental unity of apperception," mechanistically synthesize sensations received from a mechanistic natural world to produce a mechanistic conception of experience. Yet, the thesis concerning the absolute primacy of the transcendental subject is refuted by an appeal to experience itself. As Benjamin observes: "We know that primitive peoples, at the stage of so-called preanimism, identify themselves with sacred animals and plants, and take their name from them; we know that madmen at times identify themselves in part with the objects of their perception, which are thus no longer 'Objecta' standing before them; we know of sick persons who attribute the sensations of their bodies to beings other than themselves, and of visionaries who at least claim to be able to feel the perceptions of others as their own"[7] (GS II-1, 162).

Benjamin refers to these examples as "mythologies of knowledge" and designates Kantian and neo-Kantian thought as mythological in essence. By

5. *Ibid.*, B20.
6. *Ibid.*, B XVI.
7. In *Geist der Utopie* (Frankfurt, 1973), Bloch raises very similar objections to the overly mechanistic conception of cognitive experience advanced by Kant: "[Kant] asks how the formula of the attraction of masses is possible, in order to delimit the scope of the faculty of reason.... But one can obviously just as well ask how Javanese dance rites, Indian mysteries, and Chinese cults of prophecy, would be possible or...how the sacrifice of Christ, predestination, the apocalypse and various other similar synthetic judgments would be possible." Cf. p. 219.

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this he implies that these forms of knowledge are equivalent insofar as they suggest equally *profane* conceptions of experience. As such, they are not invalid, merely inferior. Benjamin seeks a conception of knowledge that is not empirical, and thus non-mythological, but *transcendent* and pure. Only after the supreme object of philosophical knowledge has been reached will an adequate conception of experience be restored. Benjamin discovers this object in the idea of God as the content of pure philosophical knowledge: "Thus the task of the coming philosophy can be understood as the discovery or creation of the concept of knowledge which, insofar as it relates the concept of experience *exclusively* to the transcendental consciousness, renders possible not only mechanical but also religious experience. Which is not to say that knowledge renders God possible, but rather that it first makes the experience and doctrine of God possible" (GS II-1, 164).

Once philosophy takes religion as its proper object, the "concrete totality of experience" — which for Benjamin is distinguished from the "sum total of all experience" — becomes accessible to it. Kant's fatal error was to have supplanted the integral notion of a "concrete totality of experience" with the prejudicial ideal of "scientific experience." If the neo-Kantians actually attempt to preserve the idea of freedom from the positivists' mechanistic conception of social action, their ready acceptance of the fragmentation of knowledge into separate disciplines remains incompatible with the idea of a higher, unified conception of experience. Therefore, in opposition to the heritage of the Enlightenment, Benjamin finds recourse to a religious notion of truth in order to establish "a pure and systematic continuum of experience" (GS II-1, 164): "What the Enlightenment lacked was authorities, not in the sense of something to which one would have to submit uncritically, but rather as spiritual powers which would have been capable of providing experience with a superior content" (GS II-1, 159).

In the *Programm* draft Benjamin's conception of what in fact would constitute a superior idea of experience is phrased only in opposition to the dominant scientistic schools of thought. Only in the final paragraph does he advance a more determinate image of what it is that would differentiate his conception of religious knowledge from other conceptions. The foundation of the coming philosophy in its search for religious truth is to be sought in terms of the *philosophy of language:* "The great transformation and rectification of the one-sided, mathematical-mechanical conception of knowledge can only be accomplished by relating knowledge to the philosophy of language.... Kant completely neglected the fact that all philosophical knowledge has its unique expression in language, not in formulas or numbers.... A concept of knowledge acquired by reflection on its linguistic essence will create a correspondent concept of experience that will also encompass the domains whose true systematic arrangement Kant has failed to grasp. The highest of these domains is called religion" (GS II-1, 168).

Benjamin's theological philosophy of language provides the *telos* of his notion of redemptive criticism. According to his religious interpretation, the secret of redemption is encoded in language. At the same time, the

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philosophy of language remains one of the most recondite chapters of an *oeuvre* that is not generally noted for its accessibility. For if it contains the key to understanding the theological dimension of Benjamin's thought, at the same time its origins are buried deep in the forbidden recesses of Kabbalist wisdom.

In 1930, Benjamin told both Adorno and Rychner[8] that only someone familiar with the Kabbalah would be able to understand the prologue to the *Trauerspiel* study. Moreover, in Scholem's personal copy of the book, Benjamin wrote, "Donated to Gerhard Scholem for the ultima Thule of his Kabbalah library"[9] — insinuating that its proper resting place would be in a library of books on Kabbalah. The actual meaning of these remarks remains in part a mystery even to Scholem. Nevertheless, there is an undeniable link between Benjamin's conception of an *Ursprache* — a pure, original and seamless totality of linguistic expression, the utopian *Ursprung* toward which his thought inclines — and the central role of language in the Kabbalist interpretation of the biblical myth of creation — which Benjamin seems to make his own with little alteration.

There are two myths of Kabbalistic origin that are essential for understanding Benjamin's notion of "origin as the goal."[10] The first concerns the myth of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge, which is designed to explain the status of the Torah before and after the Fall of man from paradise and also to provide an image of the state of redemption to which life will return with the coming of the Messiah. The Tree of Life governs the world before the Fall. It "represents the pure, unbroken power of the holy, the diffusion of the divine life through all worlds and the communication of all living things with their divine source. There is no admixture of evil in it, no 'shells' which dam up and choke life, no death, and no restriction."[11] The Tree of Knowledge, on the other hand, governs the world once this original, unified stream of divine life has been sundered by Adam's sin, and hence embodies the separation between good and evil, holy and unholy, pure and impure, etc. Prior to the Fall, when the distinction between good and evil did not yet exist, there was no need to differentiate between them. Corresponding to the Tree of Knowledge is the Torah of the Exile, which guides life in the unredeemed state in which it exists at present. It takes on a proscriptive and admonitory character insofar as the forces of evil permeate the world after the Fall. Conversely: "Only the redemption, breaking the dominion of exile, puts an end to the order of the Tree of Knowledge and restores the utopian order

8. Cf. Rychner's reminiscences in *Ueber Walter Benjamin* (Frankfurt, 1968), pp. 24-29.

9. Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: Die Geschichte einer Freundschaft* (Frankfurt, 1975), p. 158.

10. In his "Theses on the Philosophy of History" Benjamin cites Karl Kraus' maxim, "Origin is the Goal," as the motto for Thesis XIV — in reference to the French Revolution's emulation of ancient Rome as a model for its republican ideals. This use of "origin" represents a secularization of its original employment in *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, in keeping with Benjamin's later interest in historical materialism. Cf. *Illuminations*, p. 261.

11. Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York, 1971), p. 23. The allusion to the "shells which dam up and choke life" refers to the theory of "the breaking of the vessels," which in the Lurianic Kabbalah is responsible for the original influx of evil in the world.

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of the Tree of Life in which the heart of life beats unconcealed and the isolation in which everything now finds itself is overcome. Thus the inner logic of this conception of the Dominion of the Tree of Knowledge as the legitimate form of revelation in an unredeemed world had to return home to Paradise where all things will again be in their true place."[12] The Torah of Redemption presides over this state: in it the prohibitions of the Torah of the Exile dissolve, and its allegorical, esoteric content, unable to show itself in an unredeemed world, is finally revealed.

Consequently, for the Kabbalist idea of redemption, *origin is the goal:* i..e, the return to the condition of universal harmony represented by the Tree of Life, envisioned in terms of a return to paradise or a restoration of the Davidic Kingdom. Though this idea can at times take the form of a purely restorative conception of redemption, it is often infused with utopian elements. That is, it need not imply the re-establishment of an original state of things, but according to a more dynamic reading signifies a "return" to a content merely *implicit* in the original paradisiacal state, whose eschatological meaning will only unfold after the profane realm of history has been surmounted and the will of the Messiah realized. Origin is still the goal, but not as a fixed image of the past that must be recaptured *in toto,* but rather as the fulfillment of a potentiality which lies dormant in "origin." According to this conception, human activity can play a role in the realization of this goal, but since the realms of history and salvation are *antitheses,* human action can never have a *direct* effect in bringing it about; rather, its relation to the Messianic terminus always remains oblique and mysterious. This accounts in part for the fantastic speculation to which the Kabbalists were driven in their efforts to derive from the sacred texts of Judaism an indication of the utopian future. Since the Torah of the Exile and the Torah of Redemption are opposites, a reading of the former in order to gain insight into the latter can only be accomplished by way of a highly esoteric approach to knowledge. To be sure, "knowledge" in the rational sense must be forsaken since it is a profane operation of mind (corresponding to the rule of the "Tree of Knowledge") flatly incommensurable with the transcendent nature of salvation.

By drawing attention to the Kabbalists' mystical approach to scriptural exegesis, we do not suggest any direct link with Benjamin's self-understanding as a literary critic. Similarly, if one is to believe his remarks concerning the importance of Kabbalah for understanding his work, there are definite parallels between his conception of literary works of art as hieroglyphs of redeemed life and the Kabbalist idea of a state of redemption whose nature can be intuited through a linguistic analysis of sacred texts. This idea was promoted by the 13th century Spanish Kabbalist Abraham Abulafia, whose works Scholem translated into German and then brought to Benjamin's attention in connection with the linguistic-philosophical (*sprachphilosophischen*) interests of his planned *Habilitationsschrift* on *Trauerspiel.*[13]

12. *Ibid.,* p. 70.
13. Scholem, *Geschichte einer Freundschaft,* pp. 118-119.

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Under the influence of neo-Platonic doctrines, Abulafia sought a pure path toward mystical communion with God. The chief obstacle to this goal, however, was man's contamination by the impure finite world of the senses — rendering him unfit for any such transcendental experiences. Consequently, Abulafia looked for an object of meditation that would be capable of elevating the mystic above the sensible world. What he discovered was the letters of the Hebrew written alphabet: "Basing himself upon the abstract non-corporal nature of script, he develops a theory of mystical contemplation of letters and their configurations, as the constituents of God's name. For this is the real, and if I may say so, the peculiarly Jewish object of mystical contemplation: the Name of God, which is something absolute, because it reflects the hidden meaning of the totality of existence; the Name through which everything else acquires its meaning."[14]

Abulafia's theory, "the science of the combination of letters," is only the most radical expression of the long-standing Kabbalist doctrine of language as the divine substance of reality. According to this doctrine: "all things exist only by virtue of their degree of participation in the Great Name of God, which manifests itself throughout the whole of creation."[15] Abulafia merely gives voice to a theme common to all Kabbalist writings: that language is not simply a utilitarian means of communicating something, but is of an inherently divine nature. For according to Kabbalist doctrine, it is through language that God created the world. Hence, all existence has its ultimate origin and significance in the creative language of God. While human language retains close ties with divine language, it is merely *receptive* and *cognitive,* i.e., it is confined to the world of knowledge; whereas divine language is *creative*, i.e., it has engendered the world and everything in it. This fact accounts for the Kabbalists' mystical fascination with language. The name of God, the Tetragrammaton YHWH, is the chief object of mystical contemplation insofar as all earthly names have their origin in the creative power embodied in the divine name.

In a letter to Hugo Von Hofmannsthal, Benjamin writes that "every truth has its home, its ancestral palace, in language, that it is erected from the oldest logoi, and in face of a truth established in this way the insights of the individual sciences remain subaltern, as long as they, so to speak, nomadically here and there make use of the realm of language, preoccupied with that view of the sign-character of language whose irresponsible arbitrariness impresses itself on their terminology" (Br., 329). The key to this philosophy of language follows directly from the Kabbalist conception of language as the divine substance of reality. As Benjamin argues in the 1916 essay "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man," in communicating its "linguistic being," all reality indicates its origin in the creative word of God. He develops this conception by way of an interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis. There is an important distinction, he notes, between the creation of man and of all other reality. "The second version of the story of the Creation which tells of

14. Scholem, *Major Currents in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1974), pp. 132-133.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

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the breathing of God's breath into man also reports that he was made from earth" (R, 322). However, for the rest of creation, the following pattern holds: Let there be — He made (created) — He named. Thus, at the beginning and end of each act of creation ("Let there be" and "He named"), language, the word of God, plays an essential role: "With the creative omnipotence of language it (creation) begins, and at the end, as it were, assimilates the created, names it. Language is therefore both creative and finished creation, it is word and name. In God name is creative because it is word, and God's word is cognizant because it is name" (R, 323).

Yet, since not only does God *not* create man from the word but in fact invests man himself with the power of language, there is a special relation between the language of Creation and the language of man: "God did not create man from the word, and he did not name him. He did not wish to subject him to language, but in man God set language, which had served *Him* as medium of creation, free. God rested when he had left his creative power to itself in man. This creativity, relieved of its divine activity, became knowledge. Man is the knower in the same language in which God is creator. God created him in his image, he created the knower in the image of the creator" (R, 323).

As a result of the close relation between divine language and human language, man has been charged with the task of *completing* the process of creation. And he accomplishes this by translating the imperfect, mute language of things into the language of names; i.e., among creatures, man possesses a privileged status as *name-giver*. The objectivity of this process of translation is insured by the affinity between the creative word, by virtue of which all things have come into existence, and the cognizing word of man. By bestowing names upon things man elevates them, grants them dignity, redeems them from a fate of speechless anonymity.

However, upon expulsion from paradise the pure language of man suffers degradation, resulting in the fragmentation of the original language into an impure plurality of languages: "The paradisiac language of man must have been one perfect knowledge; whereas later all knowledge is again infinitely differentiated in the multiplicity of language, was indeed forced to differentiate itself on a lower level than creation in name" (R, 326-327). The original language was a *pure language of names*, it did not yet know of the (profane) separation between word and thing; i.e., it had no need of "knowledge" to produce artificially an identity of subject and object. This is the original, pre-cognitive form of cognition which serves as the *telos* for the *"Erkenntniskritische Vorwort"* to the *Trauerspiel* study. In his description of this utopian condition of knowledge, as yet unrent by the subject-object split, Benjamin makes explicit reference to the Kabbalist myth of the Tree of Knowledge (of good and evil): "For that the language of paradise would have been one of perfect knowledge, even the existence of the Tree of Knowledge cannot conceal...tne knowledge to which the snake seduces, that of good and evil, is nameless. It is null and void in the deepest sense...knowledge of good and evil abandons the name, it is a knowledge from outside, the

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uncreative imitation of the creative word. Name steps outside itself in this knowledge: the Fall marks the birth of the *human word*, in which the name no longer lives intact, and which has stepped out of the language of names... the word must communicate *something* (other than itself). That is really the Fall of language-mind. The word as something externally communicating, as it were a parody by the expressly mediate word of the expressly immediate, the creative word of God, and the decay of the blissful, Adamite language that stands between them" (R, 327).

After the Fall the original divine condition of language has sunk to the state of Kierkegaardian "gibberish" (*Geschwätz*), though at the same time the link between the plurality of impure languages and the divine *Ursprache* can still be dimly perceived. The oblique relation between the two, the conception of the latter as the distant horizon of a linguistic-critical method of literary exegesis, becomes the focal point of Benjamin's critical energies. The pure language of names is the "origin" that has become the "goal," inasmuch as its *affinity to the divine language of creation lends it the greatest proximity to* redemption. For the Kabbalists the texts which revealed the most immediate contact with God's word were of course the Scriptures. In Benjamin's quasi-secularized reinterpretation of this doctrine, not scripture alone, but also *literary works of art* are legitimate objects of the exegetical quest for the key to redemption. And the pre-eminent status that he accords literary works of art follows from their *linguistic* nature. Consequently, when Benjamin announces in the *Programm* draft that the regeneration of philosophy is possible only under the condition that the problem of knowledge is placed in relation to the idea of language, and that the highest domain of knowledge is that of religion, he is referring to his theological philosophy of language as developed under Kabbalistic influences. The philosophy of language and its concomitant *telos* of a "cognitive utopia," i.e., an original language of pure names, thus becomes the theological basis for Benjamin's conception of "ideas" in the "epistemo-critical" foreword to the *Trauerspiel* study. There, in his only work devoted solely to the theory of knowledge, Benjamin explicitly poses the problem in terminology reminiscent of the essay on language written eight years earlier. For "philosophical contemplation," "the idea is released from the heart of reality as the word, reclaiming its name-giving right. Ultimately, however, this is not the attitude of Plato, but the attitude of Adam, the father of the human race and the father of philosophy. Adam's action of naming things is so far removed from a state of caprice that it actually confirms the state of paradise as a state in which there is as yet no need to struggle with the communicative significance of words. Ideas are displayed, without intention, in the act of naming, and they have to be renewed in philosophical contemplation. In this renewal, the primordial mode of apprehending words is restored" (GTD, 37).[16]

16. In his article "Critique and Commentary-Alchemy and Chemistry," Anson Rabinbach also develops the theological connection between Benjamin's philosophy of language and theory of knowledge. Cf. *New German Critique* 17 (Spring 1979), pp. 3-14.

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*Messianic Time versus Historical Time*

Benjamin's conception of the mission of literary criticism is closely interlaced with his vision of the realm of redemption. Access to this realm must always be circuitous in the profane historical world. The latent content of redeemed life and not an infatuation with the arcane accounts for his elliptical and fragmentary presentation. The antithetical relation of redemption to the historical world, whereby the latter provides only the most ephemeral traces of the path to salvation, explains Benjamin's peculiar philosophy of history and the special position he confers on works of art. For Benjamin, the philosophy of history becomes *Heilsgeschichte*, the history of salvation, and the task of the critic — or later, that of the historical materialist — is to rescue the few visions of transcendence that grace the historical continuum, the *Jetztzeiten* or now-times, from the fate of oblivion which incessantly threatens them. For only in this manner can one prevent the fragile traces of salvation from being consumed by the destructive power of unredeemed historical life, which Benjamin designates as the "always-the-same" (*das Immergleiche*). To preserve a record of such now-times, the function of historical remembrance, is all important for Benjamin, and is related with his method of redemptive criticism. Moreover, works of art are most suited to this approach insofar as they embody, in manifest defiance against the Kantian "barrier," the utopian content of the intelligible world though *within* the bounds of the world of experience — a fact Kant acknowledged in the Third Critique when he referred to aesthetic judgment as the link between theoretical and practical reason. That Benjamin seizes on this route in his *Aufhebung* of Kant — and it was not coincidental that he assimilated these views in the course of his 1919 dissertation on the early romantics — suggests strong affinities between his approach and Schiller's and Schelling's analogous *aesthetic* path to the supersensible.

The later Benjamin, under the influence of historical materialism, refers to his method as a *Dialektik im Stillstand*. By this he means a break with the Enlightenment (and Social Democratic) notion of historical progress, which only recognizes an infinite series of empty transitions, the homogeneous time of the always-the-same, characterized by the incessant piling up of "ruins upon ruins" (I, 257). Instead, *Dialektik im Stillstand* concentrates on those focal points in history that are laden with now-time — just as Robespierre viewed ancient Rome as a "past charged with now-time that he blasted out of the continuum of history" (I, 251). That Benjamin retained this attitude toward cultural history over 25 years of literary activity — a fact that belies the juxtaposition of the early "theological" to the later "materialist" Benjamin — is supported by comparing two statements expressed at opposite ends of the spectrum of his creative life. The first, presented to the "Free Student League" of Berlin in 1915, outlines the following reflections on the idea of history: "There is a conception of history that, out of confidence in the infinity of time, discerns only the rhythm of men and epochs which, quickly or slowly, advances on the road of progress.... The following consideration leads, against this conception, to a determinate state in which history rests

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collected into a focal point, as formerly in the utopian images of thinkers. The elements of the end condition are not present as formless tendencies of progress, but instead are embedded in every present as endangered, condemned, and ridiculed creations and ideas. The historical task is to give absolute form in a genuine way to the immanent condition of perfection, to make it visible and predominant in the present.... However, it is only comprehensible in its metaphysical structure, like the Messianic realm or the idea of the French Revolution" (GS II-1, 75). Then, 25 years later, in the "Theses on the Philosophy of History," he elaborates his concept of *Dialektik im Stillstand* as follows: "Thinking involves not only the flow of thoughts, but their arrest as well. Where thinking suddenly stops in a configuration pregnant with tensions, it gives that configuration a shock, by which it crystallizes it into a monad. A historical materialist approaches a historical subject only where he encounters it as a moad. In this structure he recognizes the sign of a messianic cessation of happening, or, put differently, a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past. He takes cognizance of it in order to blast a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history — blasting a specific life out of the era or a specific work out of the life work" (I, 263). As in the 1915 address, he contrasts his quest for such instants of "messianic cessation of happening" to the idea of historical progress, which "cannot be sundered from the concept of its progression through a homogeneous, empty time" (I, 261). In the "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (1940), the project of a redemptive relation to the historical past becomes all the more urgent under the pressures of the struggle against fascism — which would shortly claim Benjamin as one of its victims. Only with the onset of National Socialism did the hitherto homogeneous and profane continuum of historical time begin to assume a determinate shape. In the later writings the struggle for redemption becomes almost a hand-to-hand combat with fascism over who will control the historical past as it lives in the memory of humanity: "every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably" (I, 255). It threatens to become a tool of the ruling classes used to perpetuate their self-serving illusions and deceits. "Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past that unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger.... Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious" (I, 255).

Benjamin counterposes now-time, "which is shot through with chips of Messianic time" (I, 263), to the homogeneous time of the historical era, which he equates with the notion of eternal repetition or myth. Man stands under the domination of mythical fate when his powers of remembrance fail him: that is, he is condemned to repeat. The recurrence of myth in unredeemed historical life remains an object of theoretical attack throughout Benjamin's writings. In the *Programm* essay, he labels the impoverished, psychologistic character of Kant's theory of experience as "mythical." Benjamin sees the

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outstanding feature of classical tragedy as its once-in-history struggle against the supremacy of myth. The outcome of this struggle is the "speechlessness" of the tragic hero once he realizes himself superior to the fate ordained by the mythical gods whom he has challenged.[17] In his uncompleted *Passagenarbeit,* he understands Baudelaire's poetry as providing an "*ur*history of the modern"; i.e., in its imagery of mid-19th century Paris it uncovers a mythical compulsion to repeat under the guise of "modernization" — the representation of the always-the-same as the "new" which characterizes the consumption of commodities under capitalism. For Benjamin, "myth demonstrates that the human species, hopelessly depraved in its quest for a good and just life, is condemned to the cycle of the reproduction of mere life and survival."[18]

Under mythical justice, which Benjamin contrasts with divine justice, life is governed by a universal network of misfortune and guilt. This is the realm of *fate* which characterizes not only the pagan religious systems of pre-history but remains predominant in the modern world under the order of *law*, where, under the guise of justice, misfortune and guilt are merely rendered abstract and take on the personalized form of "right": "Mistakenly, through confusing itself with the realm of justice, the order of law, which is only a residue of the demonic stage of human existence where legal statutes determined not only men's relationships but also their relation to the gods, has preserved itself long past the time of the victory over the demons" (R, 307). Yet, the network of guilt that grips man under the domination of mythical fate fails to touch that part of man that transcends fate, that part which is ultimately bound up with the divine realm of redemption: "It is never man but only the life in him that it strikes — the part involved in natural guilt and misfortune by virtue of illusion.... The guilt context is temporal in a totally inauthentic way, very different in its kind and measure from the time of redemption, or of music, or of truth" (R, 308).

According to Benjamin, the sphere of natural life where mythical forces hold sway can be surmounted *only through death.* Death represents the overcoming of man's "natural," earth-bound life, and his elevation to a state of communion with divine life. The idea of salvation through death is, particularly in his writings through the *Trauerspiel* study, the cornerstone of

17. Cf. GTD, 109, where Benjamin describes the fate of the tragic hero in the following terms: "what appears before the public is not the guilt of the accused but the evidence of speechless suffering, and the tragedy which appeared to be devoted to the judgment of the hero is transformed into a hearing about the Olympians in which the latter appears as a witness and, against the will of the gods, displays the honor of the demi-god. The profound Aeschylean impulse to justice inspires the anti-Olympian prophecy of all tragedy....'in tragedy pagan man realizes that he is better than his gods, but this realization strikes him dumb and it remains unarticulated.' " The analysis of classical tragedy in the *Trauerspiel* study is profoundly indebted to two sources. The idea of the "speechlessness" of the tragic hero once he has realized himself to be superior to his gods derives from Franz Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption* (Boston, 1972), pp. 209-211. The idea of tragedy as *the* art form historically appropriate to mankind's once-in-history conquest of myth (in ancient Greece) derives from Lukacs' early essay, "The Metaphysics of Tragedy" in *Soul and Form* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 152-174. Cf. Rolf Tiedemann, *Studien zur Philosophie Walter Benjamins* (Frankfurt, 1973), pp. 94-98.

18. Habermas, *op.cit.,* p. 188.

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Benjamin's method of redemptive critique. It appears in his 1917 essay on Dostoevsky's *The Idiot:* only through Prince Myshkin's death (albeit metaphorical), his return exile to the asylum, can his life therefore become immortal, can it be related to the sphere of redeemed life through the idea of its unforgettableness.[19] It is the basis for his understanding of the moment of redemption proper to Greek tragedy. There, the noble hero is sacrificed to the willfullness of the mythical gods in order that the national community might come to self-consciousness in the face of the irrationalism of mythical powers. In this way the hero is immortalized or redeemed.[20] Similarly, this view plays an essential role in Benjamin's interpretation of the redemptive function of allegory in *Trauerspiel*, whose stages revel in death-imagery, ruins and corpses: for in these stylized dramas of Counter-Reformation Germany, only a perspective that was utterly convinced of the wretchedness, profanity and insignificance of all earthly existence was deemed capable of rising above the ruins of mere life and gaining access to the realm of salvation. The idea of redemption through death simultaneously constitutes the basis of Benjamin's own critical methodology, a fact that echoes clearly in his claim that, "Criticism means the mortification of works" (GTD, 182). For the objective of criticism is, through the "mortification" of the transitory, "material" content of works of art, to permit them to bask in the eternal light of truth, and thereby pave the way for their redemption: "The object of philosophical criticism is to show that the function of artistic form is as follows: to make historical content, such as provides the basis of every important work of art, into a philosophical truth. The transformation of material content into truth content makes the decrease in effectiveness, whereby the attractiveness of the earlier charms diminishes decade by decade, into the basis for a rebirth, in which all ephemeral beauty is completely stripped off, and the work stands as a ruin" (GTD, 182). Only when mortified, when stripped of all ephemeralness, does the work of art stand ready for transposition from the transitory medium of beauty to the sacred realm of truth.

Prior to the *Trauerspiel* study, this critical procedure was developed in Benjamin's essay on Goethe's novel *Elective Affinities* (1921-22). It followed

19. The 'Idea' of *The Idiot* is described by Benjamin as follows: "The immortal life is unforgettable, that is the sign under which we recognize it. It is the life that without monument, without remembrance, perhaps even without testimonial, must remain unforgotten.... And to say 'unforgettable' means something more than that we are unable to forget it; it refers to something essential in the unforgettable itself through which it is unforgettable." (GS II-1, 238). Benjamin suggests here that despite the actual fate of oblivion to which Prince Myshkin is consigned at the end of the novel, his brief encounter with society has left such an indelible imprint, has so touched all with whom he has come into contact, that his life is in truth an unforgettable life. In "The Task of the Translator," Benjamin picks up this theme once more by claiming that one could still "speak of an unforgettable life or moment even if all men had forgotten it. If the nature of such a life or moment required that it be forgotten, that predicate would not imply a falsehood but merely a claim not fulfilled by men, and probably also a reference to a realm in which it is fulfilled: God's remembrance" (I, 70). In this way the method of redemptive critique tries to show that the "unforgettableness" of Prince Myshkin's life (even if all men were to forget it) has an a priori *metaphysical guarantee:* it will, come what may, remain immortal in the eyes of *Divine remembrance.*

20. "Fate leads to death. Death is not punishment but atonement, an expression of the subjection of guilty life to the law of natural life" (GTD, 109).

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the dissertation on F. Schlegel and Novalis and stands closest to the concept of art criticism developed in that work. It is more than coincidental that Benjamin happened to select Goethe's novel for this study. The programmatic statement of the philosophy of art criticism of the early romantics was a similar essay by Schlegel on another Goethe novel, *Wilhelm Meister*. The parallel was clear in Benjamin's mind. Both essays deal with avoiding the traditional method of aesthetic judgment based on the notion of external standards (*Regelaesthetik*) to which a work must be accountable and the concept of the "genre" through which works of art were to be analyzed. Both proceed according to the idealist conviction that every authentic work of art contains the seeds of its criticism, thus rendering the use of external standards superfluous. And finally, both conceive of the vocation of criticism in terms of the interpretation of *individual* works of art and contend that it is in fact only through criticism that works of art attain *completion*.

According to Benjamin, Goethe's novel, which was the subject of considerable controversy at the time of its appearance because of the illicit liaison that lies at its center, portrays the implacable retribution of mythical fate once the legal bounds have been transgressed — the instance of law in this case being the institution of marriage. The conspicuous absence of names in the novel is attributable to an order "whose members live under a nameless law, a fate, which fills their world with the dull light of a solar eclipse" (GS I-1, 135). The elective affinities under whose spell Ottilie and Eduard fall are not of a spiritual but of a natural kind. In *Elective Affinities,* Goethe neither sings the praises of forbidden romance nor tries moralistically to demonstrate the ruinous fate of those who flout monogamous family life. "However, for the poet, the imprint of legality remained indispensable in this work. He did not want. . . to establish a basis for marriage, but rather to show those powers that proceed from its decline. However, these are, to be sure, the mythical powers of law" (GS I-1, 130).

Goethe believes that marriage must be based on love rather than on legal or social norms (the position of Mittler's insensitive discourse on marriage). Yet, when the light of love grows dim, there is nothing to fall back on but the powers of naked law. As Benjamin states, "It is only in the act of perishing that marriage becomes the juridical relation that Mittler cherishes"(GS I-1, 130) — just as when society begins to disintegrate as an organism the state resorts to naked force to insure social cohesion. In this way, Goethe touches on the thing-like character of marriage suggested by Kant's infamous definition in the *Metaphysics of Morals*.[21] In *Elective Affinities* the institution of marriage is used as an example of the mythical vengeance that lurks behind the civilized appearance of the legal sphere: "Marriage here is neither an ethical problem nor a social problem. It is not a bourgeois form of life. In its dissolution everything human becomes an appearance and the mythical alone remains as essence" (GS I-1, 130).

21. Where Kant defines marriage as the "union of two people of different sexes with a view to the lifelong mutual possession of each other's sexual attributes." Cf. Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*, Part 1, No. 24.

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Ottilie and Eduard are victims of the mercilessness of a fate that envelops the lives of men and women merely by virtue of the fact that they participate in the order of unredeemed life: "Fate is the context of guilt of the living" (GS I-1, 138). It is a context of guilt so powerful that it can be transmitted through heredity, as is shown by the example of Charlotte's infant son. Clearly, here it cannot be a question of a *moral* error in judgment: for how could a newborn child stand accused of such an error? Rather, it is a question of *natural guilt*, "which befalls man not on account of action and decision, but through idleness and hesitation. When, failing to pay heed to the human, he falls under the power of nature, natural life, which in man preserves its innocence only as long as it is bound to a higher life, drags the latter down to its own level. With the disappearance of the supernatural life in man his natural life becomes laden with guilt, even if he commits no immoral act. For now it is in league with mere life, which manifests itself in man as guilt.... When man sinks to this level then life itself appears to gain the power of dead things" (GS, I-1, 139).

Benjamin's interpretation of Goethe's novel seems to a great extent to coincide with his analysis of classical tragedy: in both cases he proceeds by way of the three-fold schema of fate (myth), sacrifice (death), and atonement (redemption). Fate demands that the transgression of the bonds of matrimony be expiated; hence, Ottilie's sacrifice, her suicide — but also in death she finds her salvation. If the forces unleashed in the disintegration of the marriage are destined to triumph in natural life, the latter is transcended in the redemption represented by death. Thus, according to Benjamin, Ottilie's death can be best understood as a mythical sacrifice — the term he also uses to characterize the death of the hero in ancient tragedy. From the outset, the mythical world of the novel demands such a sacrifice in expiation for her sin: "In terms of the mythical world which the poet conjures up, expiation has always meant the death of the innocent.... Goethe has made myth the basis of his novel. The mythic is the material content of the book: its content appears as a mythical shadow-play staged in the costumes of Goethe's time (GS I-1, 139-140).[22] The hope we are left with at the novel's end is that the lovers will reawaken "not in a beautiful world...but in a blissful world" (GS, I-1, 200). Through death their sin has been expiated; they pass beyond the bonds of the prosaic world of convention in order to attain salvation in the blissful realm of the afterlife — or so we are given to hope. It is those who have suffered most in life who shall (we hope) capture fruits of the next. For, after all, "only for the sake of the hopeless are we given hope" (GS, I-1, 201). Goethe describes the ultimate fate of the lovers, who have been entombed in adjacent coffins, with the following words: "And thus the lovers lie side by side. Peace hovers about their abode, smiling angelic figures (with whom too they have affinity) look down upon them from the vault above, and what a happy moment it will be when one day they awaken together."[23] For

22. Bernd Witte's book, *Walter Benjamin: Der Intellektuelle als Kritiker* (Stuttgart, 1974), contains an excellent discussion of Benjamin's *Elective Affinities* Essay. Cf. pp. 31-98.

23. J.W. Goethe, *Elective Affinities* (New York, 1971), p. 299.

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Benjamin, once the material content of *Elective Affinities* is stripped away — i.e., "the mythical shadow play staged in the costumes of Goethe's time" — the truth content emerges: the hope we hold out for the redemption of the lovers suggested by the sacrificial, expiatory death of innocents.

However, by viewing the lovers' deaths strictly as a mythical sacrifice, a term that is reserved in the *Trauerspiel* for the once-in-history struggle against myth characteristic of classical tragedy, Benjamin runs the risk of de-historicizing the usage of this category. Moreover, the interpretation of the material content of the novel as mythic points to a more far-reaching problem of his philosophy of history, based as it is on the rigid separation between the historical and the Messianic ages. For if one proceeds from this distinction the historical era cannot help but appear as undifferentiated and uniform, as the homogeneous and empty time that Benjamin takes it to be. When history is interpreted on the basis of the a priori dichotomy between sacred and profane epochs, now-times must be *exceptions*, and the possibility of indicating historical tendencies capable of leading to a state of reconciliation is foreclosed from the outset. Benjamin's Messianic philosophy of history tends toward a resigned political attitude and it is not clear that the Messianic zeal carried over to his later acceptance of historical materialism provides a more realistic solution. If Benjamin distinguishes correctly between the eras of history and tragedy, he regresses to an a-historical conception of history by attempting to comprehend *all* subsequent history once more in terms of the domination of myth and fate.

Outside of the "Theses of the Philosophy of History," the question of the relation of the historical to the Messianic age is addressed in the "Political-Theological Fragment" (circa 1920).[24] In it he elaborates on the Kabbalist idea that the Messianic era represents the complete antithesis of the historical era. In the first paragraph of the "Fragment," Benjamin extols Bloch's *Geist der Utopie* for having "repudiated with utmost vehemence the political significance of theocracy" (R, 312). For theocracy naturally implies the endeavor to realize the kingdom of *divine* ends within the *profane* context of this-worldly existence, a proposition manifestly incompatible with Benjamin's conception of the mutually exclusive relation between these two orders. The Messianic age is not the *culmination* of history, but rather its *termination*, a qualitative leap into a realm beyond history. As such, a direct, organic movement from one stage to the other is impossible. As Benjamin explains, "Only the Messiah himself consummates all history, in the sense that he alone redeems, completes, creates its relation to the Messianic. For this reason nothing historical can relate itself on its own account to anything Messianic. Therefore the Kingdom of God is not the *telos* of the historical dynamic; it cannot be set as a goal. From the standpoint of history, it is not the goal, but the end. Therefore, the order of the profane cannot be built upon the idea of

24. For the difficulties that have arisen in trying to date this very important fragment — Adorno claims Benjamin had read it to him as a work in progress in 1938; Scholem contends that it dates from the early 1920s and the "materialist" Benjamin, by representing the piece as a current work, was merely trying to test his gullibility. See GS, II-3, pp. 946-949.

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the Divine Kingdom, and therefore theocracy has no political but only a religious meaning" (R, 312).

Benjamin then explains the mysterious connection between the profane and Messianic orders. But since this explanation is affected by the dichotomy between rational cognition and its transcendent object, it can only be represented figuratively. After identifying the goal of history as *happiness*, which he counterposes to the *blissfulness* of redeemed life, Benjamin illustrates the hidden interrelation between the two spheres: "If one arrow points to the goal toward which the profane dynamic acts, and another marks the direction of Messianic intensity, then certainly the quest of free humanity for happiness runs counter to the Messianic direction; but just as a force can, through acting, increase another that is acting in the opposite direction, so the order of the profane assists, through being profane, the coming of the Messianic Kingdom. The profane, therefore, although itself not a member of this Kingdom, is a decisive category of its quietist approach" (R, 312).

With this conception of the oblique relation between the historical and Messianic realms that Benjamin claims twenty years later that the task of the historical materialist is "to brush history against the grain" (I, 257). And it is in this sense, too, that the method of redemptive criticism, later characterized as *Dialektik im Stillstand,* searches against the flow of historical progress for those moments of "Messianic *cessation* of happening," the monads or now-times into which images of reconciled life are compressed. Yet, the precise relation in which they stand vis-à-vis the Messianic order remains indeterminate — for they are still merely a "category of its quietist approach."

Benjamin's kabbalistically influenced conception of the philosophy of history helps to account for his preoccupation with fragmentary works of art as contraposed to classical works of art: e.g., *Trauerspiel,* Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal,* and Kafka. For only such "profane" works of art undercut the illusory Enlightenment vision of cumulative historical progress and its concomitant myth of the infinite perfectability of man. By emphasizing the incorrigible depravity of the human condition, they refute the false semblance of reconciliation in fallen, historical life, and thereby appeal all the more imperatively to the need for transcendence. In keeping with the taboo against graven images, fragmentary works of art polemicize against the pretension to totality of this-worldly life fostered by classical works of art, and thus brush the illusion of historical progress against the grain. For, according to Benjamin, in certain historical epochs when man's relation to the absolute has become shrouded in darkness and uncertainty — e.g., medieval times, the Baroque era, Romanticism, and Expressionism — the production of "perfect" works of art is given over only to epigones, and that of authentic works assumes the form of fragments or ruins.

For Benjamin, the more inexorably historical life appears as a ruin, the more it refers to that sphere *beyond* historical life where redemption lies in store. This sphere can only be reached through the utter *devaluation and mortification of all worldly values.* In the same way that the critical mortification of works of art points the way to their ultimate salvation, so too

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the *mortification of historical life serves as the negative indication of the path to redeemed life*. In this way Benjamin's historico-philosophical methodology appears analogous to the exercises in *negative theology* in which the Kabbalists engaged. For if the Messianic age is the absolute antithesis of the historical age, the deepest insight into the former realm is allegedly indicated, albeit *negatively*, by the most thoroughly profane aspects of the latter. That is, there is a type of negative semiology whereby the profane order, if reversed, can be shown to hold the key to the sacred. A predominant motif in the Messianic literature of the Kabbalah is that of the "birth pangs" of the Messianic age. It refers to the natural disasters and catastrophes that herald the advent of the Messianic era. It is not a question of the organic transition from one realm to the next: "It is rather transcendence breaking in upon history, an intrusion in which history itself perishes, transformed in its ruins because it is struck by a beam of light shining in from an outside source. The constructions of history in which the apocalyptists (as opposed to the prophets of the Bible) revel have nothing to do with modern conceptions of development or progress, and if there is anything which, in the view of these seers, history deserves, it can only be to perish. The apocalyptists have always cherished a pessimistic view of the world. Their optimism, their hope, is not directed to what history will bring forth, but to that which will arise in its ruin, free at last and undisguised."[25]

For Benjamin history is understood as *natural* history, as a condition bent on a natural course of eternal decline. Its essence is to perish, and there is no aspect of natural life that stands as an exception to this rule. In his later work the influence of the Kabbalist philosophy of history can be most clearly perceived in his discussion of Paul Klee's painting, "Angelus Novus," in the ninth of his "Theses on the Philosophy of History." Here, Benjamin develops his conception of historical life as a vast heap of ruins that grows incessantly higher with the passage of time; yet, at one end of the catastrophe-laden continuum of history there seems to lie the light of redemption; though it appears in the opposite direction of historical progress. This passage illustrates the relation in question only through metaphorical means. In it, Benjamin proceeds by envisioning the angel in Klee's painting as the "angel of history": "His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling ruin upon ruin and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistably propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress" (I, 257-258).

The storm of progress is viewed as blowing *from* Paradise. Thus, there seems to be a mysterious relation between the pile of debris that represents progress (the storm) and Paradise. The further the angel is blown helplessly

25. Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, p. 10.

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along the path of progress, the higher the pile of ruins that accumulates, and the further it seems to travel from the source of the storm, from Paradise. The imagery of "ruin upon ruin" here is strikingly reminiscent of the Kabbalistic description of the "end of history," which precedes the coming of the Messiah. Faced with inexplicable horrors and catastrophes of Jewish history, the Kabbalists proceeded to attach an inverse, mystical significance to these events, as a result of which they were assumed to represent signs of the impending Messianic age, i.e., its birth pangs. As Scholem explains: "The dread and peril of the End form an element of shock and the shocking which induces extravagance. The terrors of the real historical experiences of the Jewish people are joined with images drawn from the heritage of myth and mythical fancy.... This catastrophic character of redemption which is essential to the apocalyptic conception is pictured in all these texts and traditions in glaring images: in world wars and revolutions, in epidemics, famine, and economic catastrophe; but to an equal degree in apostasy and the desecration of God's name, in the forgetting of the Torah and the upsetting of all moral order to the point of dissolving the laws of nature."[26]

On the basis of the foregoing motifs, Benjamin discovered the ideal object of investigation for his critical method in the genre of *Trauerspiel* and the technique of allegory. These dramas, whose heyday coincided with the traumas of the Thirty Years War, stand fully convinced of the vanity and worthlessness of all mortal life, and thus point all the more vehemently to the hope embodied in the *next* world as the only possible source of salvation. This "negative" system of references is insured by the technique of allegory, whereby the morbid imagery of the plays' manifest, profane material content becomes valueless in and of itself and only acquires significance by way of pointing to an external, transcendent referent. The didactic, repeatedly emphasized allegorical content of *Trauerspiel* is the theme of *redemption through death.* For in the context of an utterly hopeless and profane, earth-bound existence, the inevitability of death was perceived as nothing less than the guarantee of release. Proceeding from these eschatological premises, the inspired playwrights of *Trauerspiel* — Gryphius, Opitz and Lohenstein — openly revelled in the piles of corpses which cluttered the stage, the exaggerated death agonies of their martyr-heroes, and the mortality of everything earthly. For only in this way could they convey the passion of their religious conviction concerning the valuelessness of everything earthly in contrast to the sublimity of immortal life. In his exemplary extollment of the cardinal virtues of *Trauerspiel* (here, "tragedy"), Opitz makes the following claim: "Tragedy is equal in majesty to heroic poetry...because it deals only with the commands of kings, killings, despair, infanticide and patricide, conflagrations, incest, war and commotion, lamentation, weeping, sighing and such-like" (GTD, 62). Such was the path to redemption pursued by *Trauerspiel.*

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 10 and 12.

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*Allegory*

In a *curriculum vitae* Benjamin described the mission of his study on *Trauerspiel* as follows: "This book undertook to provide a new view of German drama of the 17th century. It sets itself the task of contrasting tragedy to its [17th-century German drama's] form as that of *Trauerspiel* and attempts to indicate the affinity that exists between the literary form of *Trauerspiel* and the art form of allegory."[27] And in an earlier *curriculum vitae,* Benjamin remarks that the *Trauerspiel* book "was dedicated to the philosophical content of a forgotten and unrecognized art form, allegory."[28] Only through an examination of the relation in which *Trauerspiel* stands to allegory can an understanding of the *Hauptwerk* of his early years be acquired. For allegory represents the truth content of *Trauerspiel,* in the programmatic sense of the term as it is defined in the *Elective Affinities* essay. It is according to this methodological perspective that the relation of Parts I and II of the *Trauerspiel* book, which deal respectively with *Trauerspiel* as a genre and the art form of allegory, must be understood. For Part I is almost entirely descriptive. It consists of a presentation of the extravagances and affectations of the dramas. The examination of the underlying allegorical structure of the plays in Part II deals with criticism proper, Part I investigates the material content of *Trauerspiel* and Part II, "Allegory and Trauerspiel," analyzes its truth content.

For Benjamin, all beauty is implicated in illusion. It is fated to fade. The appearance of beauty is projected by classical works of art, whose underlying structure is in essence *symbolic.* The "unproblematical" works of classicism entail a claim to totality, to an unmediated communion with the absolute. This is what they "symbolize." As such, it becomes the task of the critic to "mortify" the veil of beautiful illusion in which classical works of art are shrouded in order to permit the expressionless to appear (GS, I-1, 194-196). But the expressionless can "appear" only in a paradoxical sense, insofar as it is defined as devoid of appearance. For the expressionless is the truth content of the work of art, what emerges once the material content of beautiful illusion has been immolated in the flame of criticism. Commentary remains fixed at the eternal level of beautiful appearance, at the level of the work's material content. It is incapable of penetrating the kernel of truth that lies embedded in the work's core. Criticism restricted to commentary is certain to fail.[29]

Through the mortification of the material content, the critic allows the expressionless to step forth. As such, criticism must appear destructive of the beauty inherent to symbolic works of art. It is inimical to all appearance. In the case of Goethe's *Elective Affinities* the relation between Ottilie and Eduard is doomed to fail since it is based on the ephemeral attraction of beauty. Genuine love needs something deeper than the transitory passion sparked by a beautiful face if it is to survive. Seventeenth-century *Trauerspiel*

27. Benjamin, "Drei Lebensläufe," in *Zur Aktualität Walter Benjamins,* S. Unseld, ed., p. 53.
28. *Ibid.,* p. 64.
29. Cf. Rabinbach, *op.cit.,* pp. 4-5.

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provided Benjamin with the ideal object for this conception of criticism inasmuch as these plays are already *ruins*; i.e., through its allegorical substructure, *Trauerspiel* destroys the beautiful illusion of symbolic works of art.

Like its successors, romanticism and expressionism, the allegorical drama of the baroque period "was concerned not so much with providing a corrective to classicism, as to art itself. And it cannot be denied that the baroque, that contrasting prelude to classicism, offers are more concrete, more authoritative, and more permanent version of this correction" (GTD, 176). By emphasizing the allegorical procedure of *Trauerspiel* Benjamin seeks to counteract the romantic prejudice in favor of the *symbol* as the sole appropriate vehicle for the sensuous representation of the non-sensuous (the expressionless); and the misapprehension promoted by neo-Aristotelian criticism of *Trauerspiel* as a bastardized attempt to realize the majesty of classical tragedy. To be sure, in *Trauerspiel* no where was the golden mean of classicism to be found. But those who sought it there overlooked its historico-philosophical specificity, which is the crux of Benjamin's analysis. For the allegorical form of *Trauerspiel* is *the* form adequate to those ages in which man's relation to the absolute has become problematical, i.e., in which that relation has ceased to be immanent in life itself. Consequently, allegory devalues everything tainted by this-worldliness, the material content of its personnages, emblems, and situations, turning them instead into signposts of the path to the absolute. In such times the immediate, symbolic claim to totality promoted by classical works of art can only be chimerical. They become the province of unreflective epigones. As such, allegory and symbol have antithetical attitudes to the problem of time. For the one, the relation to redemption is immediate, for the other it is infinitely removed.

The symbol aspires to an immediate unity with what it intends. It overlaps with the universal and thus contains the moment of transcendence. Yet insofar as the symbol signifies an *aesthetic* rather than an *ontological* category, it remains always in part implicated in the world of appearance. It can never *actually* embody the union of universal and particular, but only *represents* this unity for the imagination. Rather than being a detriment, this actually indicates the *utopian* horizon of the symbol. By virtue of its "imaginary" status, the symbol represents a category of the realm of objective possibility, indicative of a relation to a "not-yet-being" (Bloch) whose reality can nevertheless be perceived in the distance.[30] Greek art was symbolic. The rivers, hills, and skies of its mythical panorama were portrayed as the actual dwelling places of the gods. Human life was never more than an arm's length away from the gods. In allegory, too, nature takes on an important signifying function. As Benjamin remarks, "The epic poem is in fact a history of signifying nature in its classical form, just as allegory is its baroque form" (GTD, 167). Yet, for the dramas of the baroque, nature is no longer symbolically represented by the serenity of the Olympian deities, but

30. Cf. Hans Heinz Holz's informed discussion of the idea of allegory in Benjamin and its relation to the symbol in "Prismatisches Denken," *Ueber Walter Benjamin*, pp. 62-110.

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allegorically by a "death's head": as the profane soil on which the pageant of eternal mortality and decomposition that constitutes historical life after the Fall takes place. Yet, neither the death's head nor the skeleton, for example, embodies the idea of decline, but each merely *stands for* this idea. In contrast to the symbol, neither exists in a self-sufficient relation to the idea it seeks to represent, but remains in need of completion from an outside source — namely, the allegorist. The meanings of the allegorical emblems and images cease to be self-evident, for according to the historico-philosophical dynamic of allegory, *all* meaning has ceased to be self-evident. In this cosmos of fragments the allegorist alone is sovereign. He is responsible for bestowing meaning in an inverted world in which any "person, any object, any relation can mean absolutely anything else. With this possibility a destructive, but just verdict is passed on the profane world: it is characterized as a world in which the detail is of no great importance" (GTD, 175). Although the profane world is devalued, insofar as it is read as an allegorical cryptogram of redeemed life, its status is simultaneously elevated. Benjamin refers to this dual character of profane life as the "antinomy of allegory."[31]

In the domain of allegory the allegorist rules "like a stern sultan in the harem of objects. . . by no means avoiding that arbitrariness which is the most drastic manifestation of the power of knowledge" (GTD, 184). The problem of the *arbitrariness* of knowledge has, in the post-paradisiac state of the world, become *the* problem of knowledge. It is attributable to the profane origin of knowledge that coincides with man's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Before the Fall there was no division between name and thing. Man spoke in the divine language of names which stood in an immediate relation to the creative word of God. As such, there was no need for (external) knowledge to bridge the gap between thinking and being. The pure *Ursprache* preceded the breach between subject and object which all subsequent knowledge has attempted to remedy. In this sense the utter sinfulness of the creaturely world described in the allegories of the baroque epitomizes a confused, godless condition in which name and thing have become separated, in which objects and their proper meanings no longer coincide. The fact that the creaturely world's relation to the absolute has become so problematical legitimates the license conferred on the allegorist in his extravagant forays into the world of objects and meanings, and also explains the melancholic temperament of the allegorical worldview.

The flagrant renunciation of the classical ideal of beauty reflected in the ruins which constitute the material content of *Trauerspiel* has its counterpart, in the sphere of truth content, in the baroque's preference for the allegorical over the symbolic mode of representation. For the profane world of *Trauerspiel*, there could be no other solution, a fact that underlines the extreme misinterpretation it suffered at the hands of its neo-Aristotelian detractors. For *Trauerspiel's* rejection of the ideal of beauty was purely voluntary. In the forsaken, creaturely world in which its dramas were staged,

31. For more on the relation between symbol and allegory, see H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York, 1975), pp. 63-73.

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any symbolic pretension to totality in the here and now would have been sheer ideology. All art is concerned with the representation of man's relation to the absolute. Allegory is the necessarily fragmentary nature of that relation in a world that has itself been reduced to ruins. Benjamin's profound concern with the *historico-philosophical* significance of genres reveals a marked indebtedness to Lukacs' early aesthetics: to his understanding of the historical uniqueness of tragedy in *Soul and Form* and his analogous demonstration of the historical specificity of the modern novel in *The Theory of the Novel.* The historico-philosophical approach points to the obsolescence of the so-called timeless standards of classical aesthetics and the necessity of comprehending works of art in terms of the material circumstances in which they originate. The ruins of *Trauerspiel* are in no way a frustrated emulation of the classical idea, but instead "the finest material in baroque creation" (GTD, 178). Through the technique of allegory the writers of the baroque period were able to conjure a relation to meaning in an age that seemed infinitely distanced from all meaning.

Redemption represents the truth content of *Trauerspiel*; yet not a "disembodied" truth separable from the material content in which it is cloaked, but one which is thoroughly mediated and attainable by it. For Benjamin, the solution to the riddle of *Trauerspiel* is to be found in the fact that not in spite of, but *because of* the utter squalor and despair of its material content, it is ultimately transformed into a theological drama of salvation. Especially to later critics, the bombast of its material content must have appeared as its most remarkable feature, so far was it removed from the serenity and proportion of classical standards. Naturally, this extreme deviation from the golden mean was usually the basis for its summary dismissal. Yet, such a verdict fails to take into account the *dynamic* character of *Trauerspiel's* allegorical structure, the fact that, in contrast to symbolic art, its relation to the universal is not immediately given. Benjamin asks, "Above all: what is the significance of those scenes of cruelty and anguish in which the baroque drama revels" (GTD, 216) — the protracted death agonies of its martyrs, the ignominious ruin that repeatedly awaits its monarchs, the intrigue and scheming of the corrupt courtier, the opulence of its language and decadence of its imagery. It is only if these dramatic celebrations of the transcience of everything earthly are understood as allegories of salvation that they are prevented from bumbling into sheer despair. "For a critical understanding of the *Trauerspiel*, in its extreme, allegorical form, is possible only from the higher domain of theology; so long as the approach is an aesthetic one, paradox must have the last word" (GTD, 216). When the light of salvation shines forth, the paradox embodied in the valuelessness of earthly life is resolved. Only from the viewpoint of redeemed life does the folly of human existence become intelligible. According to Benjamin, the structure of allegory proceeds by way of antitheses. It provides the key to a negative theology whereby fragments of profane life are transformed into emblems of salvation.

The allegories of *Trauerspiel* are at home in the world of the Fall. And yet,

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by a peculiar process of inversion, the universal mortification of fallen life paves the way for the realm of salvation. The secret of the allegorical content of *Trauerspiel* lies in the fact that its imagery of death and decline immediately calls forth a vision of redemption. The "dialectic" of allegory causes all manifest content to be transformed into its opposite: *the death's head becomes an angel's countenance*. Basing itself on the theological conception of the antithetical relation between natural history and salvation, it attempts to dramatize the *wretched* nature of earthly life in order thereby to set in contrast all the more emphatically the *blissfulness* of life beyond. *Trauerspiel* proceeds according to the religious conviction that the more frank its avowal of its own baseness, the more readily it will qualify for admittance into eternal life. Between history and salvation, the breach was absolute. By proceeding through an antithetical system of references, the allegories of *Trauerspiel* sought to pile ruin upon ruin, thereby illustrating not only the sheer futility of earthly existence, but more importantly, the hope that rests with the Almighty as redeemer. The two contrasting visions are merely complementary poles of the drama of sin and atonement, in which creaturely life finds its meaning. Thus, once the profane material content of the dramas of *Trauerspiel* is developed, their truth content as allegories of redemption can come forth.

For these reasons, *Trauerspiel* found its ideal allegorical emblem in the corpse: "the human body could no longer be exception to the commandment which ordered the destruction of the organic so that the true meaning, as it was written and ordained might be picked up from its fragments" (GTD, 216-217). Death prepares objects for a release from their profane significance and a reunion with their ultimate significance. And the object most suited for the representation of the transcience of all earthly existence was the human body. At the same time, the "obsession of the men of the middle ages and the baroque with death would be quite unthinkable if it were only a question of reflection about the end of their lives" (GTD, 218). The preoccupation with death can only be understood as an allegory of life: more specifically, of the hollowness of all natural life and its ultimate fulfillment in redeemed life. The convulsive deaths that highlight the finales of *Trauerspiel* serve to emphasize the theme of the absolute corruption of life of the flesh and the release from this life embodied in death.

As Benjamin repeatedly emphasized, "an appreciation of the transcience of things, and the concern to redeem them for eternity, is one of the strongest impulses in allegory" (GTD, 223). The baroque preoccupation with the finitude of earthly life has an immediate, historical reason and an underlying theological reason. The former lies in the monumental social upheavals of this period, in the profound instability of all institutions, both secular and religious, of an era marred by the Thirty Years' War and the fleeting alliances and counter-alliances of Counter-Reformation political intrigue. The latter finds its explanation in the network of guilt which envelops creaturely life, a guilt that prevents things from uniting with their proper significances, the prerequisite for their salvation. This guilt accounts for the *Trauer*

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("mourning" or "lament") of *Trauerspiel* and for the acedia of the allegorist. The task of the allegorist is to provide a restoration of meaning through the miraculous transfiguration of the hideous material content of *Trauerspiel* into a parable of redeemed life. He struggles for the restoration of a state in which things would once more be called by their proper names. The arduousness of his mission and the hermeticism of his approach result from a condition in which the immanence of meaning, and thereby the objective possibility of salvation, seems to have flown from the world. Hence, the allegorist is never interested in the things itself, but only in its allegorical meaning, i.e., its significance in relation to the theological concept of salvation. His approach is an insatiable "will to meaning."

Nevertheless, an important element of consolation is to be found in the extreme subjectivism of the allegorical procedure. This subjectivism testifies to the *chimerical* character of the ruins of natural life. In relation to the divine scheme of things, this life is mere "appearance." From a theological standpoint, the nullity of mere knowledge points to the insubstantiality of its representations. If knowledge can never by itself yield the absolute, the ultimate significance of the sorrowful material content of *Trauerspiel* must be other than what it appears. The primordial deficiency of knowledge thus leads — allegorically — to an unusual process of self-cancellation. Every claim it makes, every statement it utters, immediately entails its own negation. The profane network of references is reversed. The idea it conveys is that appearance and truth do not coincide, but are related only *inversely*. Here lies the device behind the ultimate redemption enjoyed by *Trauerspiel*. It is in this sense that the following explanation by Benjamin must be understood: "Allegory goes away empty-handed. Evil as such, which it cherished as enduring profundity, exists only in allegory, is nothing other than allegory and means something different from what it is. It means precisely the non-existence of what it presents. The absolute vices, as exemplified by tyrants and intriguers, are allegories. They are not real, and that which they represent, they possess only in the subjective view of melancholy.... By its allegorical form, evil as such reveals itself to be a subjective phenomenon" (GTD, 233).

By virtue of its inauthentic origin in the subjective contemplation of the allegorist, the evil of *Trauerspiel* ultimately proves illusory. In itself, the world is God's creation: "And God saw everything that he had made, and beheld that it was very good" (Genesis I:31). Only *for man*, i.e., subjectively, does evil exist. Only after the Fall does evil enter the world, along with that knowledge which corresponds to the distinction between good and evil. Evil is merely an illusory object that man confronts during the separation from the original divine stream of life. This is the origin of the illusion in which knowledge is always implicated so long as it remains removed from the original goodness of the world as created by God. "Knowledge of good and evil, then, is the opposite of all essential [*sachlichen*] knowledge. Related as it is to the depths of the subjective, it is basically the knowledge of evil. It is 'nonsense' [*Geschwätz*] in the profound sense in which Kierkegaard conceived

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the word. This knowledge, the triumph of subjectivity and the onset of an arbitrary rule over things, is the origin of all allegorical contemplation.... For good and evil are unnameable, they are nameless entities, outside the language of names, in which man, in paradise, named things, and which he forsakes in the abyss of that problem" (GTD, 233-234).

Because of the objective inadequacy of the representations of mere knowledge, the profane material content of *Trauerspiel* is rendered null and void and is miraculously transfigured into an allegorical image of redemption. By virtue of the universal inversion of meanings which characterizes allegorical emblematics, the more graphically mere knowledge portrays the hollowness of natural life, the more emphatically it calls to mind its allegorical referent: redeemed life. The sphere of knowledge corresponding to the guilt-laden context of creaturely existence voluntarily emphasizes its own baseness in order to indicate the theological sphere in which the light of salvation resides. The highest function that objects and personages in the realm of the profane can perform is to serve as allegorical references to the superior realm of redeemed life. In a world in which all immanent hope for fulfillment seemed to be brutally denied, the allegorical procedure of *Trauerspiel* perceived the acknowledgement of the depravity of its own condition as the only hope for establishing some relation to the absolute. Only according to this peculiar theological outlook can the relation between material content and the sacred truth of *Trauerspiel* be adequately appreciated.

The allegorical truth content of *Trauerspiel* follows the archetypal model of Christian eschatology: the sacrificial death of Christ. Resurrection is the link between the finitude of this life and the eternal life of redemption. One must take care, however, not to ascribe directly to Benjamin the Counter-Reformation worldview of the dramatists of the *Trauerspiel* study. The theological underpinnings of his thought stand much closer to the outlook of the Jewish Kabbalists, and it is largely on the basis of their conception of *Heilgeschichte* that his understanding of *Trauerspiel* proceeds. Benjamin's guiding impulse in this study is as much aesthetic as it is theological, though the truths of both spheres differ only in form and not in substance. His rehabilitation of *Trauerspiel* is an exercise in *retenden Kritik*. He is concerned with "redeeming" the genre of *Trauerspiel* as a "now-time" threatened with historical oblivion, and with establishing the validity of fragmentary art (in this case, the form of allegory) as the form of expression historico-philosophically appropriate to ages of decline. The allegorical structure of *Trauerspiel* presents an image of redemption despite the profane era in which it is situated, an effort that Benjamin considers exemplary, yet does not view as a timeless model. By first proceeding through an examination of the dense, alienating material content of baroque drama, he ultimately encounters a "revelation": the compelling vision of the path to redemption offered by the authors of *Trauerspiel*. Its interpretation not only frees the idea of aesthetics from a mass of neo-classicist prejudices as to what art "should be," but also offers an insight into the fecundity of an age that

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had been hitherto either neglected or abused. "In the ruins of great buildings the idea of the plan speaks more impressively than in lesser buildings, however well preserved they are; and for this reason the German *Trauerspiel* merits interpretation. In the spirit of allegory, it is conceived from the outset as a ruin, a fragment. Others may shine resplendently as on the first day; this form preserves the image of beauty to the very last" (GTD, 235).

Ultimately, the method of redemptive critique proved unsatisfactory to Benjamin. His own worsening economic situation in the early 1920s compelled him to identify more and more with Weimar's proletarianized intellectuals. Having, during a pivotal sojourn in Capri in 1924, cultivated the friendships of Bloch and the Latvian Bolshevik Asja Lacis ("one of the most remarkable women I have ever known" — Br, 351), and experienced a memorable encounter with Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness* ("[It] struck me that Lukacs, proceeding from political considerations to the theory of knowledge, at least in part...arrives at principles which are very familiar to me or endorsed by me" — Br, 355), he began gradually to distance himself from the esotericism of his early approach and search for a superior concept of experience that was more generalizable. This he would eventually discover in his own idiosyncratic and often rather unsophisticated appropriation of historical materialism. For the later Benjamin the problem of *reception aesthetics* becomes increasingly predominant,[32] although his earlier metaphysico-theological concerns never wholly drop from view. Instead, his work after the *Trauerspiel* study is characterized by an uneasy synthesis of the two extremes. On the one hand he produces essays such as "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" and "The Author as Producer," which are virtually Marxist tracts; and on the other he writes articles such as "Kafka" and "The Doctrine of the Similar," in which the Messianic motifs of his earlier work return undisguised. Occasionally, he would attempt to integrate both moments in the same work, as in the 1931 essay on "Karl Kraus." Benjamin openly referred to this oscillation between extremes as his "Janus-face";[33] and his theoretical indecision during the 1930s was exacerbated by a sort of intellectual tug of war between Brecht, on the one hand, and Adorno and Scholem, on the other, over which direction of his thought should ultimately triumph. No matter what course Benjamin pursued, he was bound to lose on one side; and what must have appeared to be the ultimate in frustration for him was that even his efforts to please a given faction only seemed to bring increased reprisals. For Scholem the Kafka essay was not theological enough (Br., 613ff). Brecht, on the other hand, accused it of promoting "Jewish fascism";[34] and his infamous judgment of Benjamin's most materialist of writings, "The Work of Art" essay, reads: "All

32. In his essay "The Early Aesthetics of Walter Benjamin," Sandor Radnoti shows how the problems of "community" and "reception" shaped the thinking of the early Benjamin. Cf. *International Journal of Sociology* (Spring 1977), pp. 76-123.

33. Cf. Scholem, *Geschichte einer Freundschaft,* p. 246. It is of interest to note that "The Author as Producer" and the "Kafka" essay were written almost simultaneously, in the spring of 1934.

34. Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht* (London, 1973), p. 110.

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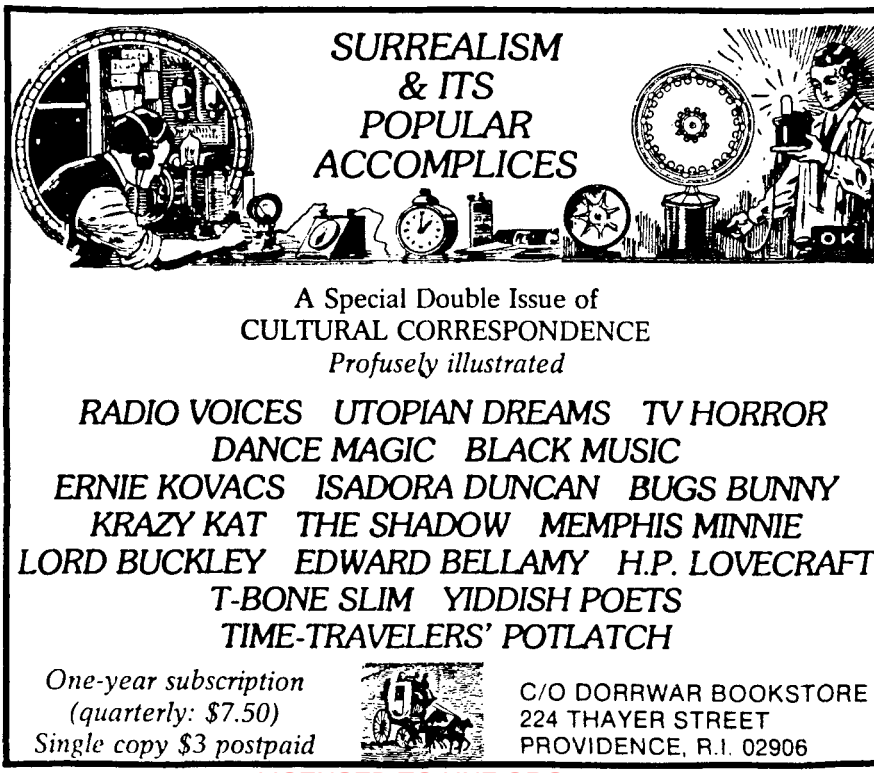
mysticism, under the guise of anti-mysticism. This is the form in which the materialist conception of history is adapted; it is rather dreadful."[35] The Institute for Social Research commissioned him to complete the Baudelaire part of his monumental *Passagenarbeit*; yet, his "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire" was roundly rejected by the editorial board and became the object of a scathing letter of censure on the part of Adorno. When Benjamin replies to the latter by saying that the letter "makes me feel as if the ground were giving way under my feet" (Br., 792), one cannot help but sympathize with him, regardless of the theoretical issues involved. Ultimately, the theological current in his thought would triumph for a last time in the "Theses on the Philosophy of History," which were Benjamin's response to the Stalin-Hitler pact.[36] Like so many others, Benjamin could only feel duped and betrayed for having so readily placed his trust in the secular forces of history. The "Theses" thus represent an unmitigated return to the Messianic philosophy of history of his earlier period. The relation between history and redeemed life is forever indirect and enigmatic. For while the "angel of history" correctly perceives progress as "one single catastrophe which keeps piling ruin upon ruin and hurls it in front of his feet" (I, 257), nevertheless, "every second of time is the straight gate through which the Messiah might enter" (I, 264).

35. Bertolt Brecht, *Arbeitsjournal*, Werner Hecht, ed. (Frankfurt, 1973), p. 16.
36. Cf. Scholem, *op.cit.*, pp. 274-275.

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# SOCIALISM AND AUTONOMOUS SOCIETY*

## by Cornelius Castoriadis

Henceforth, the terms "socialism" and "communism" will have to be abandoned. Of course, the meaning attached to words is conventional and arbitrary. But this means that the meaning of a word is what it has finally become through actual historical usage. To give a purer meaning to the tribe's words is perhaps the poet's or the philosopher's task, but certainly not the politician's. Whether we like it or not, for most people today socialism means the regime established in Russia and similar countries — "really existing socialism," as Brezhnev aptly put it — a regime that carries on exploitation, oppression, totalitarian terror, and cultural cretinization on a scale unparalleled in the history of mankind. But, then, are the parties directed by Mitterand, Callaghan, Schmidt, etc., i.e., the political cog-wheels in the established order of Western countries, really socialist? These realities cannot be dealt with by means of semantic distinctions. That would be similar to fighting the Church by pointing out that *ecclesia* originally meant the assembly of the people, i.e., the faithful, and that, in relation to this, the *reality* of the pope, the Vatican, the papal secretary of state, the cardinals, etc., is a usurpation.

At any rate, must the fate of these words be deplored? Of course, their use by the Leninist-Stalinist and the reformist bureaucracies has been one of the greatest mystifications in history. But that has already happened, and nothing can be done about it. Moreover, these terms were inadequate from the very beginning, being either tautological or dangerously ambiguous. What does it mean to be "socialist," or even "communist"? To be in favor of society (or community) — and against what? Society has always been, and will always be, "socialist," because it seeks to maintain itself as a society, instituted in a specific fashion, and because it subordinates everything to this self-maintenance, and reproduction as a specific kind of society. Even the most savagely "individualist" society is socialist in the sense that it imposes this fabricated *social* "value" — the individual — which is neither natural, nor rational, nor transcendent. That which is not the socially fabricated individual (the predicable representation: "I am an individual, and such individual," is obviously a part of this fabrication, and is one of its results) is the psychic monad, which is, as such, radically unsuited for life. For the psychic monad is radically insane — irrational and unfunctional. Although this elementary fact has been the focus of our thinking on the subject since and thanks to Freud, it has always been known and formulated by thinkers as different as Plato, Aristotle, and Diderot. Only because it was obscured in the last ten years have new varieties of confusion and mystification been able to flourish — the glorification of "desire" and of "libido," the discovery of a "mimetic" desire,

*Translated by David J. Parent.

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and the most recent Camelot launched by the culture industry: pseudo-religious neo-liberalism. As such, no matter what they say of one another, they all share the same fiction of an individual supposedly born fully constituted and determinate in essentials, and the falsity that society corrupts, oppresses and enslaves.

Otherwise, the term "socialism" contains a dangerous ambiguity. It seems to oppose a substantive primacy of social values over the individual — as if there could be a "choice" for society and against the individual. On the theoretical level, such an opposition is contradictory and is just as mystifying in practice. It remains caught in the false problematic of bourgeois philosophy and ideology. It ends up as an ideological disguise for totalitarianism and, likewise, feeds a pseudo-individualism or pseudo-liberalism.

Victorian society or, more generally, that of classical and "liberal" capitalism is "individualist" — or, at least, proclaims to be. What does that mean? That it allows a small minority of individuals, which it fabricates, to oppress and exploit the great majority of other "individuals." It functions *against* the "individual" in 90 percent of the cases. And what does the exploitation and oppression of contemporary Russian society mean? Does it mean that every individual is oppressed and exploited for the benefit of the collectivity, i.e., for the benefit of all others? Certainly the individuals that make up the Russian people are not oppressed and exploited by the Russian people, but by the Communist bureaucracy — by a particular sociological regrouping of individuals. Russia is an authentic "individualist" society for 10 percent of the individuals in it.

Societies that fabricate slave-individuals — almost all known societies except the Greek democratic city and its modern heirs — do not enslave them to the *collectivity*, which would be a contradiction. They enslave them to the given *institution* of society, which is quite a different thing. The savage was enslaved not to the tribe as a real collectivity. Rather, he and the collectivity are enslaved to the laws established by the "ancestors." The Jew, the Christian, the Muslim are not enslaved by their collectivities, they are slaves of their society's given institution, of an immutable and intangible Law, whose originator is a transcendental God.[1] Even in Greece, the Spartan is not enslaved by other Spartans or geographical location, but by Spartan laws, posited as intangible and attributed to a mythical founder, Lycurgus. The mythical origin of the law (e.g., God giving the tables of the law to Moses, Christian revelation or Mohammedan prophecy) has the function of assuring the preservation of a heteronomous institution of society by incorporating the idea of an extra-social origin of law, which is by definition essentially excluded from human activity.

On the other hand, wherever there has been a breakdown of instituted heteronomy, the autonomous individual and the autonomous collectivity appear simultaneously. More precisely, the *political idea* and the *political question* of the autonomy of the individual and of the collectivity appear.

1. See my *L'Institution Imaginaire de la Societé*, pp. 148-150, 293-296, and 496-498.

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Each is possible and makes sense only in terms of the other. The individual, as we know him by a few examples and as we want him to be in general; i.e., the autonomous individual (even while he knows himself to be caught in a senseless order-disorder of the world) who claims and assumes responsibility for what he is, what he says, what he does, is born at the same time and by the same movement through which the city-state, the *polis*, emerges as an autonomous collectivity, i.e., one that does not get its laws from an external, higher authority, but poses them for itself. The breakdown of mythical or religious heteronomy, the challenging of socially instituted imaginary significations, the recognition that the institution of law *nomos* as a historically created nature, is inseparable from the birth of philosophy — an unlimited questioning that knows no inner or extra-worldly authority — just as the birth of philosophy is inconceivable outside of democracy.

In Greece, originally democracy was also called *isonomy* — equality of the law for all. But what is the law? The law is not only "formal" law, which literally in modern societies is written law, but moreover is the institution of society. Equality and liberty cannot be limited to certain areas, i.e., equal rights of defense for individuals before the courts, while ignoring the *real* functioning of these same tribunals, which could turn this equality into a mask for inequality as it does even in the so-called democratic societies. Equality and liberty cannot be the liberty and equality to establish an individual enterprise, if meanwhile society makes a sinister mockery of this right for four-fifths of the individuals. I do not remember which socialist (Bellamy, I believe) discovered that the law just as rigorously prohibits both the rich as well as the poor from sleeping under bridges. Nowadays the arguments of Hayek, Schumpeter, Popper, etc., about "private property" and "free enterprise" are being recycled (of course, without mentioning their origin and presenting them as new) as foundations of democracy and liberty. Yet, that the function of private property and of free enterprise under present conditions turns out to be an institutional mask for the real domination of a few is still being ignored.

The fact that a few are discovering or claim to be discovering the horrors of Stalinist and Maoist totalitarianism so many decades after the fact does not validate and justify the inequality and servitude, exploitation and oppression that characterize Western capitalist societies. The recognition that "individual rights" wrested from Western capitalism in the people's struggles are not "formal" does not diminish the critique of the *real* manner in which they function in minority-dominated societies. These rights were never "formal" (in the sense of "empty") but they were always *partial, possibilities*, and they remain so. They will remain so, tautologically, as long as society is divided antagonistically between dominators and the dominated.

What was designated by the term "socialist society" will now be called "autonomous society," which implies liberty and autonomous individuals. But what is liberty? And which liberty? Here, it is not a question of philosophical or metaphysical liberty. It may or may not exist, but if it does, then it is just as absolute and inviolable for a Descartes as it is for the prisoner

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beaten and tortured by the Gestapo, the KGB or the Argentine police. It is not a question of inner liberty, but of a *real, social, concrete* liberty involving in the first instance the greatest possible *space for individual movement and activity* assured by society. And the institution of society is the aim of politics in its authentic sense. Only a fool or a charlatan (our era furnishes a rich assortment of both in many apparently paradoxical combinations) can claim to be interested in liberty but not in the question of the "state" — politics.

But liberty here implies real *equality* — not metaphysical or "natural equality," conceived in the social, instituted sense, but of equality of all rights and duties, and of all *real possibilities of action* that depend on the institution of society. For example, social inequality is always also inequality of power: it immediately becomes inequality of participation in instituted power. How then can you be free if others have more power than you? Power, in the social and real sense, means to have someone or a group do what they would not have wanted to do, based on the facts. But, since the idea of a society without any power is an incoherent fiction, the first answer to the question of liberty is the equality of all in the participation in power. A free society where power is really exercised by a collectivity in which all participate effectively in equality. And this equality of real participation, as an end to be attained, must not remain a purely formal rule, but must be assured, as much as possible, by real institutions.

I have already said that the idea of a society without any power is an incoherent fiction. It is tempting to say that an autonomous society would aim simply to limit as much as possible the scope of collective power and to enlarge the field of real individual autonomy. But that is only half true. Certainly, the heteronomy of contemporary society (even in its most "democratic" forms) implies much more than a mutilation of individual autonomy as well as of the rest of various particular collectivities that comprise society. But from this it by no means follows that an autonomous society must seek the disappearance of all collective power as an end in itself. Only fragmentary human beings — contemporary pseudo-individualist intellectuals — see the collectivity as evil. Liberty is liberty to act, alone and with others. To act with others is to participate in a common activity and to accept an organized coexistence and collective enterprise in which decisions are made in common and carried out by participants.

Confusion about the relation of liberty and equality is not novel. It exists in as deep a thinker as Tocqueville,[2] and Marx did nothing to dissipate it (in his

2. I know only one passage in Tocqueville where he clearly conceives the identity between equality and liberty, "One can imagine an extreme point at which liberty and equality touch each other and merge together. I suppose that all citizens who concur in government have an equal right to concur in it. No one being different from his fellows, no one will be able to exercise a tyrannical power; men will be perfectly free because they are entirely equal, they will be perfectly equal because they are entirely free." *De la Democratie en Amerique*, Book I, p. 101. But even in the same passage Tocqueville speaks of the equal 'right' to concur in government and ignores the question of effective equality of the conditions of exercising that right by everyone. For the difficulties of the thought of Tocqueville in this respect, see Claude Lefort, "De L'Egalité a la Liberté," *Libre*, No. 3 (1978), and François Furet, "Tocqueville et le problème de la Revolution Française" in *Penser la Revolution Française* (Paris, 1978).

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naive distrust of the political question, which was the reverse of his naive belief in the solution, or rather the dissolution, of all questions once the transformation of the relations of production had been achieved). This confusion is possible only with acceptance of the most superficial, insubstantial, and formal meanings of the terms liberty and equality. They appear inseparable once they are given their full weight, and are loaded with socially instituted reality. Only equal men can be free, and only free men can be equal. Since of necessity there is power in society, those who do not participate in it equally are under the domination of those who do and are therefore unfree in spite of the idiocy of the illusion of freedom because they have chosen to live and die as idiots, i.e., as simple private individuals (*idioteuein*). Moreover, participation (this is obviously one of the points on which the modern labor movement has gone further than Greek democracy) can be equal only if the real social (and not juridical) conditions are equal and apply to all. Conversely, there can be no equality in a society where men are not free, since the power exercised over these unfree men establishes an essential inequality.

Unfortunately, it is once again argued that socialism realizes equality at the detriment of liberty and therefore we must opt for regimes that preserve liberty while sacrificing equality. This is based on the tacit assumption that total and totalitarian bureaucratic capitalist regimes are "socialist" regimes. Discussion of such questions cannot be confined to merely endorsing sociologically and politically the name that a regime gives itself (otherwise Stalin's affirmation that the Russian constitution is the most democratic in the world would have to be accepted — and the argument falls by itself). But how is it that regimes that proclaim themselves "socialist" realize equality? What economic, social and political equality exists between the dominant bureaucratic caste, the middle bureaucracy, and the masses of workers in Russia or China? Regimes that have usurped the term socialism are not only "less liberal" than others, they are much more strongly inegalitarian, from all viewpoints (including the real economic viewpoint). But leaving aside other viewpoints, how is equality realized in a society where some can put others in concentration camps? What is this strange (pseudo-Marxist) blindness that identifies equality in general, even economic equality, with the elimination of private owners of the means of production (and their replacement by a dominant, privileged, unremovable, self-coopted, self-perpetuated bureaucracy) and cannot see that only the form of inequality has been changed?

What a strange amnesia this is, which has erased two centuries of sociological critique and analysis of the often fictitious and illusory character of freedoms and liberty under the capitalist republic. Once again, what is meant by liberty? Have capitalist societies ceased to be societies of domination? Can society be called free if the majority is dominated by a minority?

No one can claim to be interested in "liberty" and reduce it to a limited and essentially passive aspect — "individual rights" — any more than "individual rights" can be confined to the narrow juridico-political sphere as happens in

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the so-called "democratic" countries. For liberty requires the elimination of instituted domination by each group in society. The institution of domination is not formally "written" into modern constitutions. The Russian constitution does not spell out explicitly the dominance of the party-state bureaucracy in the same way that Western constitutions do not mention the domination of capitalist and big bureaucrats. Of course, in the latter, individual rights and the political system in the narrow sense, as well as other factors, limit this domination,[3] but that is outside the scope of this discussion.

Thus it appears as if Russian totalitarianism's sudden discovery by some dull youths and others more mature but somewhat over-ripe melons serves to cast a new mystifying veil on the depths of the social and political question. Once again, strange objective complicities are being established. The Russians are not only oppressed, they are also exploited as few others are. On this point, neither the Western champions of "human rights" nor the various Left groups whisper a single word. But other peoples are also exploited. Assuming that the struggle for "political rights" in the narrow sense precedes the others, let us suppose that by some miracle the Russian bureaucracy were led to "democratize" its domination. Would Russia's social and political question then necessarily be solved? Would the elimination of police and juridical blemishes resolve the social and political question in France?

Long live liberty! But watch out, liberty must stop at the doors of the enterprise. There is no question of being free at work. The parrotlike litanies continue about Marx as a precursor of totalitarianism, etc. But they remain slaves of the fundamental capitalist postulate: work is the realm of necessity, i.e., of slavery. Apart from that, self-management is a form of totalitarianism. For, isn't an assembly line the most consummate form of the monotheistic republic and the promised land of true spiritual liberty? Nothing else can be done, mentally, but to communicate with an inaccessible transcendence.

Men who are slaves in their work (i.e., the greater part of their waking life) and who fall asleep exhausted before a brutalizing and manipulating television set are not and cannot be free. The suppression of heteronomy ends the domination of particular social groups over the whole society and changes the relation of instituted society to its institution, i.e., it ends the enslavement of society with regard to its institution. The two aspects appear with blinding clarity in the case of production and work. The domination of particular groups over society cannot be abolished without removing their domination over the process of production and work — without abolishing the bureaucratic hierarchy in the enterprise as everywhere else. Hence, the only conceivable organization of production and work is *collective management* by all participants. This has subsequently been called self-management, often in order to make it a reformist cosmetic of the existing state of things or a "field of experimentation" — while careful silence about the colossal

3. I have insisted on this point too often to have to go back to it. See, for example, "The Social Regime in Russia," *Telos*, No. 38 (Winter 1978-79).

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implications of this idea is maintained. A real collective management — an active participation of all in common affairs — is practically inconceivable if the differentiation of remunerations were to be maintained (a maintenance which absolutely nothing could justify). Self-management implies equality of all salaries, revenues, etc., yet it would rapidly decompose from within if it were just a matter of self-managing the accumulation of existing profits. Self-management could be strengthened and developed only if it entailed an immediate conscious transformation of existing technology to adapt it to the needs of humans as producers and consumers. But it would seem impossible to set any limits *a priori* to this transformation and evidently, it could not be limited. If desired, self-management can be called self-organization; but self-organization *of what?* Self-organization is also self-organization of the socially and historically inherited, omnipresent *conditions* in which it develops: the machines, the instruments of work, but also its products; its personnel, but also their living places and habitat, and their relation and of course, human beings, their social formation, their education in the deepest sense of the word — their *paideia*. Self-management and self-organization either amuse people or mean exactly the explicit self-institution of society (explicit, in the sense of knowing itself as such). This conclusion is reached, whether the question is taken in its most concrete, mundane aspect, or in its most abstract, philosophical aspect.[4]

Liberty does not have merely the passive or negative aspect of protecting the sphere where the individual's autonomous power to act would be guaranteed by law. Even more important is its active and positive aspect, on which the preservation of the former depends both on a long and short term. Laws are scraps of paper without the citizens' activity; judges and courts cannot remain impartial and incorruptible in a society of "individualist" sheep who are uninterested in what power is doing. Liberty (autonomy) necessarily implies active and egalitarian participation in any social power that decides common affairs. The liberal-*idiotic* intellectual, if sufficiently stupid, can believe himself free in enjoying the privileges provided by the instituted social order, while forgetting that he has decided nothing — neither the Camelots, nor the news, nor the quality of the air he breathes — and can remain in this idiocy until he freely falls victim to an H-bomb whose launching was freely decided by others. But the ability to decide is not just to decide current affairs. To participate in the management of an intangible state of things, to be autonomous, means to give oneself one's own law, i.e., common laws, both formal and informal, of institutions. Participation in power is participation in *instituting power*, belonging equally with others to an explicitly self-instituting collectivity. Liberty in an autonomous society is expressed by two fundamental laws: no implementation without egalitarian participation in decision-making. There is to be no law without egalitarian participation in passing the law. An autonomous collectivity has as its motto

4. See my texts of 1947-48 in *La Société Bureaucratique I; Capitalisme Moderne et Révolution I;* and *La Société Française.*

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the following: *we are those whose law is to give ourselves our own laws.*

This active and positive aspect of liberty (autonomous society) is indissolubly linked with the question of the autonomy of the individual. An autonomous society implies autonomous individuals who cannot exist as such except in an autonomous society. But, what the individual does in regard to the collectivity and to himself depends decisively on his social fabrication as an individual. "Inner liberty" itself (not only in the sense of *real freedom of thought* but even in the sense of a free will) depends on the institution of society and the kind of individual society produces. "Free will" is exercised only between alternatives that are really given to the individual and seem *possible* to him. Free will cannot permit the subject of an Oriental despot to think that the God-King is merely crazy or feeble-minded. No Jew of the classical period is free to think that perhaps everything that Genesis says is just a myth. Before Greece, no member of society could possibly think, "our laws are bad, our gods are false, our worldview is purely conventional." Hegel mistakenly took the Asiatic world to be the liberty of only one man, while the Graeco-Roman world the liberty of a few. The Asian "one man" was not free, he could think only what the institution of society imposed upon him. Yet, despite slavery and the condition of women, Greece inaugurated freedom in a deep sense that all *can* think otherwise. For the individual to think freely, even in his inner awareness, society must raise, educate, and fabric him as a freely thinking individual — something which very few historical societies have done. For this requires the creation and institution of a public space of thought open to questioning, which excludes immediately the positing of the legal institution as immutable, just as it excludes radically the idea of a transcendental source of the institution (of a law given by God or gods, by nature or even by reason, if by reason we mean a totality of exhaustive, categorical, atemporal determinations, anything but the very movement of human thought). At the same time, this implies an education in the deepest sense, a *paideia* forming individuals who have the real possibility to think for themselves, which would hardly be given by birth or by a divine endowment. Moreover, to think for oneself is psychically impossible, not only if something is imposed as the source of truth, but also if what is thought or not thought makes no difference, if we do not consider ourselves responsible for our acts and words.

The radical questioning of the instituted imaginary and the democratic aim that emerged from the ancient city-state was taken up again in the modern era by the intellectual and political movement of Enlightenment philosophy and culminated in the American and French revolutions of the 18th century. Half a century before Marxism, the nascent labor movement in its turn adopted and expanded them considerably. This expansion translated into transcending — not forgetting — the narrow field of "politics" by extending the meaning and aim of democracy by means of the idea of the "social republic." The critique of the instituted order and the democratic claim are addressed not only to the political system, but also to economic organization, education, or the family. This is manifested very clearly in the

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osmosis between the labor movement and the different currents of utopian socialism during the first half of the 19th century and even later — as long as the Marxist pillory had not finally strangled the movement's social creativity.

At first and sometimes later, Marx was inspired by the best of this historical creation. But also from the first, he displayed the rationalist, scientistic, theoreticist tendency that rapidly took the upper hand and led him to seek a finished global explanation of society and history, which he found in the determining role of production and the elevation of its development into a universal key for understanding history and for transforming society. By virtue of this, Marx — regardless of what he subsequently thought or said — greatly constricted the range of the movement's preoccupations and aims. Of necessity, he concentrated everything on questions of production, economy, classes (defined on the basis of production and economy) and ignored or minimized the rest by implying that the solutions would follow naturally from the expropriation of the capitalists. The political question in the broad sense of the overall institution of society and in the narrow sense of the real exercise of power by the collectivity, and the problems that this exercise entails were ignored or at best envisaged as corollaries to be derived once the principal theorem was demonstrated in the practice.

That Marx and Marxism were able to exercise a preponderant and truly catastrophic influence on different labor movements is not just the effect of Marx's genius or his satanic spirit. The dominant character of economic production and the corresponding *reduction* of every social and political problematic are nothing but the organizing themes of the dominant imaginary (*imaginaire*) of his epoch (and ours): the capitalist imaginary. The reception of Marxism marked the reintroduction (or resurgence) in the labor movement of capitalism's principal social imaginary significations, from which it had tried to disengage itself in the preceding period.

The confusion introduced into the socialist labor movement was enormous in all areas, but nowhere as pernicious as in politics. This is illustrated by a particularly rich point: the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Marx considered one of his original contributions to be the dictatorship of the proletariat,[5] a historical phase inserted between capitalism and communism.[6] For a long time, this term meant the dictatorial use of power and the existing state apparatus by the proletariat for the purpose of transforming society. As such, Marx fell short of his own historical experience. He was incapable of concluding from the French Revolution — though it would accord perfectly with his own theory of history — that the Revolution had not, and could not have, simply used the *ancien* state apparatus for its own ends, that disruption from top to bottom was necessary and that it had been marked by an extraordinary and deeply innovative instituting activity from 1789 to Thermidor. Not until the new institutional form of the Commune in 1871 did Marx see the form of the dictatorship of

5. See "The French Left" in *Telos*, No. 34 (Winter 1977-78).
6. Letter to Wedemeyer, March 5, 1852.

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the proletariat and conclude that the socialist revolution could not simply use the old state apparatus, that it must destroy it and create in its place a power "which is no longer a state in the proper sense of the term," etc. Lenin defended this conception before October 1917, in *State and Revolution*. Neither Marx nor Engels nor Lenin spoke of the party as an "organ" (still less "a directing organ") of the dictatorship. They can be reproached for ignoring the problem of the party or parties (i.e., of possible and even inevitable political divisions within the proletariat), but they cannot be said reproached for identifying the power of the proletariat and the power of its party.

The change is radical in Lenin and Trotsky after October. In *State and Revolution*, Lenin explained that the power of the proletariat is nothing but the power of mass organisms, that every state apparatus separated from the population must disappear. The very term "party" did not exist as a political concept in *State and Revolution*. But upon taking power, the practice of Lenin and others, which installed and so rapidly consolidated the power of one party, had strictly speaking nothing to do with this conception. Reference to the subsequent attempts to justify this practice is useless. To say that the Bolshevik Party assumed sole power in self-defense because the other parties were against the revolution is wholly untrue. Neither the anarchists, the Social Revolutionaries, nor the Mensheviks were opposed to the revolution; they opposed the policies of the Bolsheviks. In truth, the justification of the party would be stated clearly by Lenin two or three years later, in *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, with the same crude pretexts of *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*: in society, there are classes, the classes are represented by parties, the parties are directed by directors. There is only one point here. To every class there corresponds one party and to every party, one possible political line — thus also, only one team of directors, expressing, defending, representing the line.

The stupidity of this position — which is certainly not attributable to Lenin or Trotsky — can be rendered plausible by two possible ways anchored deeply in the Marxian system, which illustrate again the antinomy which opposes this system to Marx's revolutionary thinking. Either the proletariat arrives at the revolution perfectly homogenized, not only from its position in the relations of production and of its interests, but especially in the representation it has of this position, its interests and aspirations. This homogenization necessarily also includes an almost automatic agreement on the *means* to establish the new society. This in turn would imply that the evolution of the capitalist economy and society effectively realizes this homogenization on a worldwide scale. In this regard, a notable cleavage of thought not only with the Marxists but of Marx and Lenin themselves exists. On the one hand, they insisted on a theory of the capitalist economy and society that would guarantee this homogenization (broadly speaking, the social chemistry of Vol. I of *Capital*, which constantly disposes capital at the positive pole and the proletariat at the negative). On the other hand, they knew pertinently that this image was false (cf. the aged Marx's and Engels' dicta on the English working class, or Lenin's in *Imperialism*, on the "labor aristicracy"). Of course, such a homogenization

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does not and could not exist. Furthermore, it is also assumed that this homogenization of real existence was automatically matched by a unified and adequate consciousness. (For real homogenization would be useless if illusions and false ideas persisted.) In other words, one must resort to the crudest, most mechanical reflection theory (such as was practiced, for example, by Garaudy before he discovered the light of Christ).

Otherwise, the flagrant absurdity and practical futility of these fables having been implicitly recognized, in view of a really non-homogenized proletariat that still retains its illusions, the party that has the one truth must face the astonishing human faculty for diversity of opinions. It can thus distinguish between workers who think according to the essence of their being and those who are workers only empirically and phenomenally, and who therefore must be reduced to silence (at best paternally "educated," at worst sent to "re-education camps" or shot). Thus, the true theory (that is to say, according to the Marxian conception, corresponding to the interests and the historical role of the proletarian class) and the party as its incarnation can go above the heads and the cadavers of the empirical workers to rejoin the essence of a metaphysical proletariat. The different positions of contemporary Marxists on this question are a dialectical mixture of these radically incompatible conceptions whose main bond is duplicity and bad faith.

Let us postulate (pure hypothesis) the existence of a Marxist who recognizes reality, who admits that the proletariat is not effectively homogenized, and whether homogenized or not, it can contain different schools of opinion, and further that possession of any theory neither permits nor authorizes one to distinguish between those opinions and to decide for the proletariat what must be done. (An example of this would be a councilist or a Luxemburgist, who on the theory that "the errors of an authentic mass movement are historically infinitely more fecund than the infallibility of the best Central Committee," would have dumped Luxemburg's mechanistic economics and been open to the contemporary world as it is.) Yet such a Marxist could still not speak of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and truly mean by it the dictatorship of the proletariat's autonomous collective organisms.

First, the very concept of proletariat has become totally inadequate. It could have made sense to speak of the proletariat as subject of the socialist revolution when it was believed to be a social reality of manual workers. But today, in modern capitalist countries, almost everyone is a wage earner. Manual workers as well as "pure operators" have become minorities in the population. In light of this, it is impossible to speak of the "dictatorship of the immense majority over an infinitesimal minority" (Lenin). If we speak of wage earners in general, we end in absurdities, since engineers, bureaucrats, etc., would be included in the proletariat, while small farmers or craftsmen would be excluded. It is not a sociological but a political question. Either the dictatorship of the proletariat means nothing, or it means that those who do not belong to the proletariat have no political rights or have only those which the "proletariat" chooses to grant them. The real advocates of the

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"dictatorship of the proletariat" should have the courage to explain that they are in principle for the suppression of the political rights of farmers, craftsmen, independent *masseurs,* etc., and also that the publishing of a medical, literary or philosophical revue, etc., would depend on *ad hoc* authorizations of workers.

What then is proletarian? And who defines what it is? Those who distinguish between productive and non-productive work? Will it be necessary to wait for the Central Committee to settle these questions?

In reality, what is at stake is something much deeper than the term "dictatorship of the proletariat" or even "proletariat." It is the entire theory of classes, the entire predominance attributed to the economy by the imaginary and the conception of the transformation of society. Social transformation, the establishment of an autonomous society,[7] today concerns *de facto* and *de jure* almost the entire population. It is its business — only to the degree that the entire population makes it its business. May 1968 provided a striking illustration of this, positively as well as negatively (where was the class front in May 1968?). This is not just a question of arithmetic nor the attitude of a particular social stratum relative to given economic conjunctures. The historical preparation and cultural and anthropological gestation of social transformation can neither be the work of the proletariat by exclusive title nor by special privilege. There can be no question of giving any particular social category, whichever it may be, a sovereign or "hegemonic" position. Nor can one list a hierarchy of contributions by the various strata of society to this transformation. The deep changes introduced into contemporary social life by movements that can have no class definition or basis — like those of women or the young — are just as important and germinal for the reconstruction of society as those introduced by the labor movement. On this point one can again observe what has become of the profoundly reactionary character of the Marxist conception. If Marxists of all types — Stalinists, Trotskyists, Maoists, socialists, etc. — first ignored these movements, later opposed them, and finally recovered them by emptying them of content, it was neither merely shortsightedness, nor imbecility. Here, for once, they were in a coherent relation with the deep spirit of the conception they boasted of (of course, not by a sudden immoderate love of coherence; because their politico-ideological existence depended on it, their existence as directors or spokesmen of the proletariat. A Marxist is obliged to assert that all these movements are minor and secondary or he must stop being a Marxist. For his theory affirms that everything is subordinate to the relations of production and to the social classes that these define; how could anything truly important whatsoever come from another source? But, in fact, the issues raised by the women and youths, by the immense anthropological mutation they have unleashed, which is still in process and whose course and effects it is impossible to foresee, are sociologically just as important as those which the labor movement has raised. In a sense, they are even more significant, for the

7. See, e.g., "The History of the Workers' Movement," *Telos,* No. 30 (Winter 1976-77).

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structures of domination that these movements address — male domination, the enslavement of the young — historically antedate the establishment of a division of society into classes and are probably rooted in deeper anthropological levels than the domination of labor.

The transformation of society, the establishment of an autonomous society, implies a process of anthropological mutation that evidently could not be accomplished solely in the process of production. Either the idea of a transformation of society is an uninteresting fiction, or the contestation of the established order, the struggle for autonomy, the creation of new forms of individual and collective life invade (by conflict and contradiction) all spheres of social life. And among these spheres, none plays a determinant role, even in the last instance. The very idea of determination is nonsensical.

Last but not least, if the idea of proletariat has become hazy, the idea of dictatorship has not. What distinguishes Lenin or Trotsky from the Althussers, Balibars and Elleinsteins is that they are not paid by words. There is a political existence of the real man of state — even if totalitarian — impossible to be confused with the political non-existence of destitute ideological functionaries. It is of the same order as the difference between Ava Gardner and the ugly old maid who is consumed in dreams in which she is Ava Gardner. Lenin knew what dictatorship always means, and he expressed it admirably, namely that "dictatorship is a power that is not bound by any law."[8] For this is the original and true meaning of the term dictatorship. Whoever exercises power dictates what is to be done and not only is he not bound by moral laws, fundamental or constitutional laws, or general principles (as, for example, the non-retroactiveness of laws — which a dictatorship can always ignore), but by absolutely nothing: not even dictates of the day before. Dictatorship means that power can shoot people today because they conformed to laws it itself passed the day before.

It is useless to say on behalf of power that this would be absurd and counterproductive behavior from its own viewpoint. Stalin spent a good part of his life doing just that. It is not a question of knowing whether the dictator (individual or collective) could judge, in his own interests, that it would be better to avoid arbitrariness. It is a matter of understanding that dictatorship means to abolish all limits to the arbitrariness of power.

The idea that a power — of Stalin, Mao, the proletariat, or God the Father — not bound by any law could lead to anything but total tyranny is absurd. The dictatorship of the proletariat implies that the organs of the proletariat could change, in function and in view of such a particular case, both the definition of the crimes and penalties and the rules of procedure and the judges. Even if it was exercised by St. Francis, such a power must be fought to the death.

All this is not just a matter of quibbling and subtleties. We have proof of the contrary at the two extremes of the human spectrum, of course the monstrous, but also the sublime. The idea of a power not bound by the law —

8. *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky.*

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written, positive law — was defended by Plato in a problematic that is by no means totally off track. Plato says in his *Statesman* that the law, like an "arrogant and ignorant man," can take into account neither the changes of circumstances, nor the individual cases, and is opposed ideally to the "royal man" who can each time decree and dictate what is right and what is not, deciding on the specific case without crushing it in abstract universal law. In this strict sense, the law for Plato is just a stop-gap measure made necessary by the deficiencies of human nature and in particular by the improbability of the "royal man" (or the philosopher-king). But Plato is at the same time enough of a realist to twice write the laws of the city which he felt would be just.

The discussion of the law in the *Statesman* can be underestimated neither for its depth nor for its relevance. First of all, this discussion raises the question of equity. "At the same time justice and better than justice," as Aristotle profoundly said. The question of equity could, by definition, never be assured by the law.[9] The question is that of the accomplishment of real social equality between unequal and dissimilar individuals. Consequently, for the very reasons Plato indicated, never can the question of justice be regulated simply by the law, and infinitely less by a law fixed forever. The question asked by Plato — beyond all the empirical expedients we could imagine in reply to him — shows the depth of the substantive political question. On the one hand, society cannot be without law. On the other, law does not and will never exhaust the question of justice. Moreover, it can even be said that law is the opposite of justice, but without this opposition there can be no justice. Society, once it has escaped religious, traditional or other heteronomy, will be able to live only through this ineliminable gap, which opens it to its own question: the question of justice. *A just society is not a society that has adopted just laws, once and for all, rather it is a society where the question of justice remains constantly open* — in other words, where there is always the socially real possibility of questioning the law and its foundation. This is another way of saying that it is always in the process of its explicit self-instituion.

Again, Marx remains in this respect much more Platonic than he believes, both when he advocates the dictatorship of the proletariat and when he suggests that during the higher phase of communist society law, "unequal by nature," would disappear, because there would be the "universal blossoming of the individuals" (here the "whole man" has simply replaced the "royal man").

Plato and Marx rightly relativized the given law. But they also relativize the law as such — and this is where the sliding takes place. From the obvious fact that every law is always defective and inadequate, due to its abstract universality, Plato draws the ideal conclusion that the only just power would be that of the royal man and the "real" conclusion that movement must be stopped, the collectivity be molded once and for all in a mold so calculated that the divergence, in principle irreconcilable, between the real matter of the

9. See "From Marx to Aristotle, From Aristotle to Us," *Social Research*, 45:4 (Winter 1978).

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city and the law may be reduced as much as possible. Marx concluded that the law would cease in the achievement of a society of regulated spontaneities, whether the abolution of alienation would cause the good original nature of man to re-emerge, or "objective" social conditions and training of the subjects would permit an integral reabsorption of the laws, by the individual's psycho-social organization. In both cases — as moreover in all political philosophy at that time — the essence of the socio-historical, and of the institution of law, the relation between instituting society and instituted society, the relation between the collectivity, the law and the question of the law are overlooked. Plato failed to recognize the collectivity's capacity to create its own regulation. Marx dreamt of a state where this regulation would become completely spontaneous, but the idea of a society made of regulated spontaneities is simply incoherent. Aristotle would rightly remind him that it would apply only to wild beasts or gods. And if in the higher phase of communism, such as Marx dreamed of, right and law would be superfluous because the laws of social coexistence would have been completely internalized by the individuals, incorporated into their structure, such an idea must be fought against. A totally internalized institution would be equivalent to the most absolute tyranny and, at the same time, to the stopping of history. No distance would be possible with regard to the institution, any more than a change in the institution would be conceivable. We can judge and change the rule only if we are not the rule, if the divergence persists, if externality is maintained — if the law is posed opposite us. This is the very condition that permits us to call into doubt that which we could think otherwise.

To abolish heteronomy does not mean to abolish the difference between instituting society and instituted society — which would be impossible anyway — but to abolish the enslavement of the first by the second. The collectivity will give itself rules, knowing that it gives them to itself, that they are or will always become inadequate, that it can change them — and that they bind it as long as it has not changed them in a regular manner.

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# GREECE AND THE COMMON MARKET

## by Scott G. McNall

A small state, like a small company, does not shape economic destiny, but bends its policies to assure survival in the dominant economic order. Thus, Greece is and will remain on the fringes of the capitalist economic system. Its recent elevation to full partnership in the Common Market has made it a small capitalist state trying to buy time, but at a high cost: permanent dependence on the dominant powers. The Greek state, compared to other state bureaucracies, is remarkably independent, i.e., it is able to operate in the interests of more than one class, and sometimes acts against the interests of a national elite. Yet, in order to guarantee its own survival, it also acts in the interests of international capitalism, represented by the multinational corporations. The Greek bourgeoisie is, then, fragmented between established national elites, with ties to ventures traditionally associated with merchant capitalism, and an "international" elite with ties to multinational corporations.[1]

*The Historical Background*

In a sense, Greece remained a dependent country even after its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1821. Though Greek independence fighters fought heroic battles, the great powers, Russia, France, and Great Britain, had to guarantee the peace and the new Greek state. During the long, 400-year period of subjugation to the Turks, a set of values developed that shaped the emerging state system and economic development.[2] During the Byzantine period, Greeks were peasants and shepherds, and in 1821 Greece was essentially non-Western. Since the Sultan regarded his Orthodox Christian subjects as a *millet* (nation) of which the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (the head of the Orthodox Church) was both the spiritual and worldly leader, the latter became the head of a nation within a nation. Thus, the Church, whose language was Greek, assumed the duty of preserving not only the faith, but the Greek "nation," or Hellenism itself. Because there was no government to represent the Greeks, the church often became the center of social organization in the villages. The prestige of the village priest was considerable, and the fact that he lent not only moral support, but in some cases himself, to the war against the Ottoman Empire, served to consolidate the struggle.

In order to help administer the lands under the Ottoman Empire, the

1. Cf. Rickard L. Sklar, "Postimperialism: A Class Analysis of Multinational Corporate Expansion," *Comparative Politics*, 9 (October 1976), pp. 75-92.

2. Scott G. McNall, *The Greek Peasant* (Washington, 1974), and "Value Systems that Inhibit Modernization: The Case of Greece," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 9 (1974), pp. 46-63.

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Sultan appointed Phanariots in addition to the Patriarch and the members of the Synod. These were public officials of considerable importance. Many of them were Greeks who, like their religious counterparts, were committed to Greek education and development. Thus, the Turkish empire really had two heads, with the military and bureaucracy controlled by Turks, and practically all commerce controlled by the Greeks. The Phanariots' power depended on their ability to maintain order among Greek-speaking peoples and collect taxes. Dual systems of authority existed in some areas, the Ottoman being directed from the top down and the Greek from the bottom up, though real control was still vested in the Ottoman ruler and his representatives. This political system led to bribery, deceit, favoritism and the arbitrary use of power, for all of the usual reasons. The only hope of the common man was to have a friend in power. After 400 years of extra-parliamentary democracy, the one thing needed to move officials was "the right connections."

When Greece achieved independence, it was basically a nation of small farmers. Agricultural production was typically Mediterranean, i.e., wheat, olive oil, wine, grapes and figs. The size of the plots and the nature of the enterprise meant that virtually all tasks could be performed by the nuclear family. From as early as 300 B.C., the peasant was involved in a market economy. Geographical conditions favored the intense specialization necessary to produce oil and wine for export. During the Ottoman domination, there was also a tax policy that reinforced market behavior: Greeks had to pay their taxes not in kind, but in cash. Thus, true subsistence farming was not possible.[3]

During the Ottoman period, a Greek merchant class emerged whose fortunes were closely linked to those of the Turks. A Greek diaspora occurred slowly through the 18th century, with entrepreneurs penetrating Europe as the Empire's representatives —to Venice, and then to the Romanian provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia. After 1774 , though, there was a dramatic expansion of the diaspora when the Russian government granted free passage for ships carrying the Russian flag through the Turkish straits. Greek ships were freely granted Russian registry during this period. Furthermore, Greek merchants no longer had to offer their cargoes for sale in Constantinople at artificially low prices. As McNeill has noted, "An enormous boom resulted. Grain production in the Ukraine, organized by the estate agents of Russian noblemen, got into high gear, and Greek (with some other) merchants undertook the profitable task of distributing Russian grain exports around the shores of the Mediterranean.... Ideas and men travelled with the ships and cargoes that circulated between the Aegean, the Black Sea, and the rest of the Mediterranean. A large Greek community arose in Odessa, the major entry for the export of grain from

3. William H. McNeill, *The Metamorphosis of Greece since World War I* (Chicago, 1978), p. 35. For an excellent description of the different social structures that emerge from participation in a cash, or market, economy, see Jeffrey M. Paige, *Agrarian Revolution* (New York, 1975).

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southern Russia; and other Greeks fanned out into lesser centers in the Ukraine and the Crimea where they took on various middlemen's occupations."[4] The merchants' power, however, was essentially unstable. Their role as middlemen was dependent on the political protection of the Turkish state, and, as middlemen, they incurred the enmity of many of their fellow Christians. "Most peasantries saw the urban middlemen as oppressors, quite as alien to their way of life as the Turkish landlords and administrators were."[5] With the War of 1821, there was a shift in the Turks' fortunes, and the diaspora ended.

The role of the diaspora bourgeoisie, however, remained crucial and played a role in shaping the modern Greek state. They carried the "myth" of the Greek state, which developed during the Turkish domination. This myth was based on a belief created by Byzantine intellectuals that the people inhabiting Greece are direct descendants of the ancient Hellenes (which meant that if a regeneration of the Greek state were to take place, it would be in terms of classical Greek culture), and what is called the *Megali Idea* (the Great Idea). This Great Idea of the revival of the Byzantine Empire and the desire to "replace the Crescent by the Cross" on the dome of St. Sophia, the symbol of Eastern Christianity, became a driving force in Greek politics.

One cannot understand the extensive Greek educational system without examining the role of the diaspora bourgeoisie. Vast amounts of capital were sent to the Greek government from abroad to supplement the national budget, in order to build schools and to improve Greek culture. In one year, for instance, over a third of the national budget for education came from one donor. The diaspora bourgeoisie, however, were instrumental in shaping an educational system that was remarkably "impractical." It stressed the learning of classical Greek instead of spoken Greek and encouraged reforms that divided the population into clearly distinct classes. The majority of those who received a classical education became part of the elaborate state bureaucracy.

At the time of independence there were three major classes in Greece: a group of independent farmers who participated in a market economy; a merchant class heavily involved in trading; and a small class of landlords. There was a shift after 1821, when the state came to control most of the land and sought to prevent concentration of land. This meant a continuation of the class of small, peasant farmers. Yet, in some areas of Greece such as Attica, which did not become part of the Greek state until 1823, big landed property persisted. The situation was similar in the wheat-growing areas of Thessaly, which was not annexed until 1881. Here Turkish landlords sold their estates intact to many of the Greek diaspora bourgeoisie.

The regionalism of the young Greek state still affects patterns of communication and development. This autonomous development of separate

4. McNeill, *The Metamorphosis of Greece, op.cit.*, p. 39.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

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areas may involve links to Athens, or perhaps even Berlin or London, but not to other parts of the country. The Peloponnese was characterized by independent farming, Athens by trading, Thessaly and Attica by landed estates. Greek shipping had linked some of the disparate portions of the Greek state, but most shipping had developed during the Ottoman period to move exports to Europe, the near East and Eastern Europe. There was literally no industrial base in the country and production was geared primarily to serve the needs of those tied to the export sector and-or shipping.

At this time capital was essentially indigenous. Some capital accumulation took place with piracy during the 16th century, but most of it was due to the expanded activities after 1774. Rapid capital accumulation at this time also permitted Greeks to finance the building of their own ships, which, of course, accelerated the process. Only in a few instances did foreign capital join with Greek capital. Thus, there was the early development of an independent bourgeoisie that could have moved from the export sector to industry. The revolutionary period (1821-1828) curbed the growth of indigenous capital. However, the annexation of Thessaly in 1881, and the addition of Epirus, Macedonia, part of Thrace, Crete and some of the Aegean islands, because of the Balkan Wars and World War I, swelled both the population and the economy, and created a fairly large internal market. An industrial base could have developed, but no movement in this direction occurred. The urban bourgeoisie was reluctant to shift from trade to the uncertainties of new industry. They focused on commodities which had an immediate market, and on "traditional" enterprises such as ship building. This situation held until at least the early 1960s.

Having been saved by the Great Powers, the young Greek state was saddled with one of their representatives —a Bavarian monarch. The constitution and early state structures were thus imposed from without. The policies of the new state were not geared to make Greece economically independent. Democratic revolutions in 1844 and in 1862 curtailed the power of the Crown and strengthened the power of the patrons. The early Greek party system was usually based on loyalty to important community chiefs or prominent merchants, who played the role of intermediary. Regionalism was also reflected in the polity and class interests played a minor role in politics. At the same time, the state was expanding. But, in the absence of any policies, development took place in a haphazard fashion. The state provided both jobs for those flocking to the cities and patronage. The larger the state apparatus, the more patronage there is to be distributed. Greece soon developed one of the largest state bureaucracies in the world —larger on a per capita basis than that of the major industrial powers.

From 1880 to 1920, there were a number of parliamentary crises, with resignations and new governments, but nothing spectacular happened until 1922, when the Greek government, driven by the Great Idea and

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irredentist dreams, decided to attack the forces of Kemal Ataturk. The Greek losses meant that the borders of Greece were permanently fixed; more than a million refugees had to be accommodated by a population close to 5 million; the ethnic character of Macedonia was changed; and the state took on a more active role. The impact cannot be underestimated. Land reform had to be pushed, which meant that some fallow land was brought into cultivation, thereby increasing the amount of food-stuffs available for both export and local consumption. A sizable urban labor force sprang up, for many of the refugees had been involved in skilled occupations in Asia Minor. They also brought with them a substantial amount of capital. These favorable circumstances combined to spur the development of an industrial sector.

The later 1920s and 1930s saw the emergence of finance capital. This was the time of the "multiplication of holding companies, trusts and cartels which, although they did not achieve the dimensions of the Western European counterparts, were very impressive by Balkan standards.... These developments are clear indications of the gradual rise of finance and industrial capital at a time when big landed property had virtually disappeared, and when merchant capital, in the wake of increasing state control of the import-export trade, and the gradual deterioration of the export markets for currants and tobacco, was at a standstill."[6] All of this development came to an abrupt halt between 1940 and 1950, when Greeks fought first World War II and then one another.

*From 1940 to 1960*

At the end of the Greek Civil War in 1950 the problems facing the country were enormous. One third of the population was on relief, and one tenth of the population had to be resettled. The productive capacity of much of the country was destroyed and had to be rebuilt. Retreating German forces had destroyed rail lines, ports, had blocked the Corinth Canal, poisoned wells, and destroyed crops. Currency was inflating, and balance of payment problems were solved only by the intervention of Greece's allies. Modern Greece's dependency, however, begins with the British withdrawal from Greece in 1947. The British forces had originally come to the aid of the Greek government in its fight against the leftist guerrillas, but this conflict proved to be more than the British had bargained for. In 1947, the Labor Party decided to withdraw both economic and military support. At this stage the Greek government was totally ineffectual. Truman went before Congress in 1947 to argue for support for both Greece and Turkey, which was approved in May and begun in earnest in August. Originally, the intent was to develop the country economically, but it became clear that no development was possible with the civil war raging. The Americans wanted to build hydroelectric plants, but the dams were planned for areas held by the guerrillas. Early American aid took the

6. Nicos P. Mouzelis, *Modern Greece: Facets of Underdevelopment* (London, 1978), p. 24.

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form, then, of developing transportation facilities such as roads, docks and ports, and communication systems for the Greek army.

In 1948, Congress extended the Marshall Plan to Greece, and U.S. involvement shifted from short-term to long-term. At this time the Greek government "was quite incapable of the sort of independent economic and social planning that had gone into the definition of Marshall Plan goals in countries like Britain, France or Italy."[7] This meant that the American Aid Mission and its subsequent versions did practically all of the economic planning. The aid was not ill intentioned. It was assumed that New Deal planning could be applied to Greece, and that soon the country would be on the road to economic recovery. Such assumptions, however, ignored the pre-war Greek economic structure. Greece was not another France or Germany that could be reconstructed by a massive infusion of money.

The financing of the post-war economy thus generated unintended problems. Capital accumulation shaped social formation. In 1948, a Central Loans Committee (CLC) was established by the American mission and included representatives from the Bank of Greece, the Greek government, the American Aid Mission, and other banks. Its purpose was to distribute all agricultural and industrial loans out of the drachma resources made available by the United States. The commercial banks forwarded all loan applications to the CLC, who had final approval, and could also authorize the Bank of Greece to make available foreign exchange to finance imports necessary for industrial and agricultural development. The value of all loans was in drachmae. Repayment was to be in dollars for both the interest and principal at the exchange rate of the dollar which prevailed when the loans were due. The events were devastating, and even led some senior American officials to see the program as "a deliberate conspiracy to strangle Greek industry in order to maintain American importations."[8] This loan policy was inflationary and led to a number of defaults. Most of the loans were made to industry (more than half), with agriculture, mining and power each receiving about 12 percent. Tourism, which attracted attention later, only received about 1.7 percent. The pattern seemed to benefit a few large industries. Furthermore, the loans were given to industries in the urban area of Athens, which encouraged economic concentration and regionalism.[9]

The CLC was not meeting the needs of financing industry, partly because it simply did not have the available resources. In 1954, the Economic

7. McNeill, *op.cit.*, p. 87.

8. Diomedes Psilos and Richard Westebbe, *Public Development Financing in Greece* (New York, 1974), pp. 64-65.

9. As Psilos and Westebbe have shown (*ibid.*, p. 84), of all CLC allocations to industry, two firms account for 29 percent of the loans, and about 50 percent of them can be accounted for by eight firms. "The 236 loans to industry and guerrilla-damaged industries were allocated among 37 types of industry, most of which operated in the Athens-Pireaus area. Slightly less than 50 percent of the value of such loans was accounted for by eight loans of $1 million or more, with the balance in small- to medium-sized loans. Approximately $9.4 million were granted to the Hellenic Company of Chemical Products and Fertilizers, and $2.5 million to the Hellenic Gunpowder and Cartridge Company, giving a total to these two enterprises of $11.9 million, or 29 percent of the total approvals to industry."

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Development Financing Organization was established. In an agreement to which the U.S. Operations Mission was central, the EDFO was supposed to collect $78.5 million of the credits granted by the CLC, and to grant medium- and long-term loans to industry, agriculture, fisheries, mines, tourism, etc. Loans were issued up to 1957, with a bank guarantee, approval by the Currency Committee, the recommendation of the Minister of Coordination, and finally, of the Director of the U.S. Operations Mission. Like the CLC, the EDFO concentrated its loans instead of spreading them over the country, as would have been necessary for development. Unlike the CLC, however, a considerable part of its total funds (22.7 percent) went to the construction of hotels for tourism. Out of $8.7 million allocated for all tourist construction, $3.5 million went to a single borrower, the Pezas-Hilton in Athens.[10] Industry was not the only area to benefit from EDFO's existence, for a commission was paid to the banks to "supervise" the loans. EDFO paid out $3,219,000 in commissions between 1954 and 1961, which was 61.6 percent of all operating expenses. What emerged during the postwar period, then, was the concentration of capital in the hands of a financial elite with the assistance of U.S. aid.[11] Finance capital clearly dominated merchant and industrial capital, and the State Bank, representing the interests of all the elites, clearly played the major role in determining investment policies.

U.S. economic aid to Greece was always meant to be a short-term affair, and, accordingly, the U.S. made plans to decrease support in the late 1950s, and terminated economic aid by 1962, though substantial amounts of military aid continued to flow to Greece as a member of NATO. In 1962, the U.S. suggested to the members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development that they establish a consortium for financing Greece's economic development. A number of countries — France, Italy, Canada — came forward and offered instead to extend credits to Greece to allow it to purchase their goods. With the exception of the United States, none was willing to provide low-interest loans. These credit purchases ultimately contributed to the balance of payments problem.

Aids and investments from the end of the Civil War until the early 1960s led to the dominance of a finance capital interested in building segments of the economy other than the industrial sector. This meant the continuation of a pattern of development not unlike that that Greece had seen at the beginning of its independence. Workers constituted a low percentage of the total population, and the amount of the national income from

10. It was noted (*ibid.*, p. 71) that "EDFO's financing operations have been concentrated on relatively few activities. Eight business concerns received a total of $32.9 million representing 51.3 percent of total loans approved. More than half of the loans were over $1 million, averaging $3,153,000; about 28 percent of total loans were from $100,000 to $1 million; the rest were small loans below $100,000."

11. Some idea of the concentration of finance capital can be gleaned from the fact that by 1962 the National Bank of Greece (the state bank) and the privately owned Commercial Bank of Greece accounted for 92.3 percent of all bank assets.

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non-industrial sectors remained high.[12] The effect of the heavy post-war development in urban areas was to drain villages of some of their most productive workers and to contribute to heavy underemployment in these urban regions. Today the Greek population stands at close to 9 million, with about 3 million living in the greater Athens region. Like the diaspora, this has had an effect on Greek society, for nearly a third of all capital inflow into Greece in the early 1970s came from foreign sources.[13] This money was usually used to purchase luxury items and basic necessities.

Both people and wealth flowed from the rural sector to the urban sector, contributing to a growing imbalance and a creation of two economies — a rural one geared to simple commodity production and an urban one involved in monopoly capitalism. In fact, when Greeks have capital they spend it on their houses.[14] When Greeks invest, they buy apartments, not factories. The state, then, must play a major role in investing in industrial development.[15] Many of the investments in manufacturing are for small companies employing primarily family members, and involved in the production of consumer goods. The state funds the development of industry while private capital goes elsewhere.

As already noted, there is a tendency for Greeks to be suspicious and to value the family unit. At present 84.3 percent of all industrial concerns employ less than four people.[16] This is unparalleled in any other Western country. Many of these employees are either members of the nuclear family or relatives. Much of the industrial growth of Greece can be accounted for by these labor intensive, small-scale firms. Thus, the situation confronting multinational corporations when they began investing on a serious basis after 1960 was as follows: There was an urban labor force, but often it was

12. In 1955, for example, agriculture, hunting, fishing, and forestry still accounted for about 25 percent of the total GNP, while manufacturing accounted for only 18.2 percent. In 1958, the per capita income of someone living in the Athens urban area was $494, while it was less than half of this for those living in the islands, and only $275 for those in the Peloponnese. Cf. McNall, *The Greek Peasant, op.cit.*, p. 76.

13. Between 1951 and 1961, for instance, more than 3 percent of the total population of Greece migrated to countries such as the United States and Australia and many more left for temporary employment in Northern Europe. (The West German government is negotiating with the Greek government for the return to Greece of 800,000 Greek workers.)

14. Cf. Ministry of Coordination, *National Accounts of Greece* (Athens, 1976), p. 161. At present, a significant part of Greece's gross national product comes from the construction of private dwelling units. Many of these are new apartments in Athens, and a "traditional" urban dowry is to provide the daughter, or daughters, with one floor of an apartment house. Thus, Athens is full of partly finished buildings with the ground floor occupied by the parents, and the remaining floors in various stages of completion, depending on the marital prospects of the daughters. Between 1950 and 1975, about 30 percent of all expenditures on all fixed assets has been for housing, which means that private funds are not normally available for investment in industry.

15. Cf. Pella Lenoudia, "Public Enterprises in Greece," *Public Finance* (1963), pp. 287-306. Since 1958, the state has accounted for an average of about 25 percent of gross fixed asset formation. Most private funds are concentrated in descending order on dwellings, manufacturing, transporation (including private cars) and agriculture. Cf. Ministry of Coordination, *National Accounts, op.cit.*, pp. 156-158.

16. National Statistical Service of Greece, *Statistical Yearbook of Greece, 1975* (Athens, 1975), p. 23.

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tied to small family firms that had migrated from the country. There was not a surplus labor population, though a considerable number of Greeks were underemployed in both rural and urban areas. The government's development policies, to the extent that they existed, were geared to encourage tourism and foreign investment. Furthermore, Greek investment decisions had been heavily influenced by the involvement of the American Aid Mission. To some extent, the Greek government was a dependent of the United States, having had to rely on it for an extended period of time to make up major deficits in the budget. The Greek government controlled investment and credit, but within limits developed during the post-war period. The government continued to be dominated by personalistic politics, as opposed to party politics, and government positions were the major source of patronage. Greece was capital-hungry and the policies of many of its governments, whether of the left, right or center, was simply to deal with that problem. Loan requests, aid requests, investment opportunities for foreign businessmen were all affected. Each government sought primarily to stay in power, rather than to solve the underlying structural economic problems. That shaped Greece's response to the multinationals and the desire to join the Common Market.

*The Penetration of the Multinationals*

What incentive did multinational corporations have for locating in Greece? They went, of course, for roughly the same reasons that they have located in other countries. They sought to get behind tariff walls, to respond more quickly to local markets, because of lower labor costs, to prevent competitors from gaining advantages, to diversify product lines and markets, and to assist affiliates in their expansion. They also went because of the growing Greek internal market as a result of population growth, tourism, and rising affluence. Finally, they went because Greece provided an excellent location for expansion into other countries.

In order to understand their impact, we must examine specific areas of investment and compare this with the structure of the Greek economy. Although no investments of any significance occur until the early 1960s, the major sources of foreign capital between 1953 and 1973 were the U.S., West Germany, Switzerland, France, England and Italy. Most of the major foreign investments are in capital intensive rather than labor intensive areas.[17] Thus, the main reason for going to Greece was not cheap labor

17. U.S. investments, which account for two-thirds of all foreign investment in Greece, center in chemicals (23.6 percent of total investment), petrochemicals (19.5 percent) and basic metals (26.7 percent). The West Germans also have sizable investments in the chemical industry (17.6 percent), though most are in electrical machinery (26 percent), followed by sand, stones, earth (cement) (20.4 percent). Switzerland has its major investment in basic metals, more than 40 percent, with the bulk of the remaining investments made up of electrical machinery (29.3 percent), the metal industry (14.2 percent) and textiles (6.4 percent). France has literally all of its resources (76 percent) tied up in the production of basic metals. England's investments are less concentrated, but it has heavy investment in chemicals (30.1 percent), rubber and plastics (23.2 percent) and basic metals (19.7 percent). Italy has most of its capital in petrochemicals (57.6 percent) and cement (20.8 percent). Data from the Greek Development Bank reported in

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(although both West Germany and Switzerland have sizable investments in electrical machinery, which, in addition to being capital intensive, also makes use of chaper labor than is available in Western Europe). Many of the areas of investment are also areas of high technology, e.g., plastics, chemicals, petrochemicals, rubber and plastics, and basic metals. The multinationals, then, have exported to Greece technologies they can use to dominate a given industry.

On the whole, Greek capitalists are unwilling to commit themselves to the development of the industrial sector, which means that the Greek state, in concert with foreign concerns, underwrites the cost.[18] Also, when a cheap resource, whether it be coal, iron, bauxite, copper or oil, is available, a country like Greece attracts multinationals, for these are not the resources normally developed by an indigenous bourgeoisie. One of the reasons the local bourgeoisie is not attracted to these ventures has to do with factors other than available capital, and that is control of world markets. As the Chilean government found out, it doesn't make much difference whether or not one controls the resources, if one doesn't have access to markets. (This obviously does not hold true where one product cannot be substituted for another, e.g., oil.)

Greece has pushed development ventures with the multinationals to provide jobs for the growing number of wage workers. Greek tax policies come close to making the entire country a free trade zone. (They encourage regional headquarters to locate there by exempting all corporate income earned elsewhere from Greek taxes, as well as providing incentives for those firms that ship their finished goods outside Greece.)[19] Another area of major investment concentration, particularly on the part of the Greek government and the local bourgeoisie, has been tourism. As already indicated, a number of the loans available for this purpose were concentrated in the hands of a few individuals. What is perhaps more significant than the way major hotels are developed by local resources is the type of labor involved in tourism. Tourism is encouraged because it provides one of the main sources of income for the Greek state. Tourist dollars provide about one out of every

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Wilhelm Hummen, *Greek Industry in the European Community, Prospects and Problems* (West Berlin, 1977), p. 77.

18. When a foreign company such as the French aluminum company Pecheney decided to come to Greece, it was able to get the Greek government, a partner in the venture, to supply electricity at low cost. Alcoa completed plans in 1979 for the development of a $350 million smelter of which the Greek government will own 40 percent. Greece will also supply the bulk of the funds. In addition, Alcoa, which has an energy-saving smelting process in the planning stages, will not use this technique in Greece, but will rely on the "established" techniques. Why? Because, again, the Greek government is providing power at low cost, and is underwriting many of the costs of the plant's development.

19. Thus, in March of 1979, the Greek government, which is to provide the bulk of the financing, joined with the Greek subsidiary of Datsun to build a new automobile plant, and in September agreed to work with Del Monte to build a cannery in Thessaly. Both of these projects received a considerable amount of publicity in the Greek press in terms of the number of jobs (600 in the case of the Datsun plant) they would create. The point that should be emphasized is that providing jobs is not the concern of the multinationals, but of the Greek government. Many of the multinationals are export-oriented, or are interested in capital-intensive enterprises.

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20 dollars for today's entire gross national product of Greece, or about one billion dollars in 1978.[20] Tourism causes the proliferation of the service sector and the building trades, as new hotels go up to provide for the tourists and apartments are built for workers chasing elusive tourist dollars. Take the well-visited Greek island of Mykonos, where in 1972, 75 percent of all the shops along the waterfront were strictly for tourists; they sold no food, clothing or household items, only souvenirs.[21] Thus, tourism as a major source of income and representing a simple rather than a capitalist mode contributes to the existence of the dual economy. An economy is developing in which a significant part of the population is involved in the volatile tourist trade (severe problems are caused, for example, by dislocations in the Middle East), a portion involved in a labor-intensive agriculture, a sizable number who produce consumer goods in small family firms, and the multinational corporations who dominate capital-intensive industries.

Thus, Greek enterprises fall into roughly the following categories: First, food, shoes and clothing constitute the bulk of total enterprises with 16.4 percent for food and 19.7 percent for shoes and clothing.[22] Of those industries that employ large numbers of workers, the tobacco industry, petrochemicals, basic metals, rubber and plastics, textiles, and paper stand

20. Foreign exchange earnings were $139 million for the first quarter of 1978, up over 25 percent from the previous year. Cf. Embassy of Greece, *Greece, A Monthly Record* (Washington, 1978). Growth in this area is extremely important for the economic stability of the entire country. Close to 5 million tourists (compared to Greece's total population of 9 million) traveled to Greece in 1978. Much of this traffic was concentrated in the Athens area, in a few select islands, and a few "typically" Greek villages. To some extent, tourism also contributes to the problem of regionalism. Greece and its people have become a resource like bauxite or cheap labor. Tourism does not really alter the basic mode of production and permits a number of Greeks to participate in this sector of the economy while maintaining a very traditional life style. They may sell local handicrafts to tourists from their porch, offer a room for rent, or charter boats. They can do so within the context of their traditional life style. Tourism, like many of the ventures of the multinationals, "solves" the problem of unemployment. As Schneider has observed, "Nearly all of the Mediterranean governments have, with considerable success, mounted intensive campaigns to woo the citizen of the developed country to spend a vacation on some lovely Riviera.... Like emigration, tourism has the dual function of attracting foreign currency and employing peasants (as well as urban proletarians) who have been forced off the land by the introduction of 'labor-saving' machines and the decline in value of agricultural products on world markets." Cf. Paul Schneider, "Modernization and Development: The Role of Regional Elites and Noncorporate Groups in the European Mediterranean," *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, 14 (1972), p. 342.

21. Margaret A. Stott, "Economic Transition and the Family in Mykonos," *Greek Review of Social Research*, 17 (1973), p. 130.

22. National Statistical Service, *Statistical Yearbook of Greece, op.cit.*, p. 79. These are traditionally Greek industries owned and operated by small family groups. For example, more than 90 percent of all those involved in the production of shoes and clothing are in the industries that employ fewer than four people. In the area of food production, 84.2 percent of all workers are in shops with fewer than five employees. Work forces of this size are characteristic of cottage industries, and with few exceptions, Greece is made up of this kind of enterprise. Furniture making, leather work, and a host of other activities follow this pattern, i.e., they are family-owned enterprises. There are important variations in the size of the enterprise with its location in the country. Though most food industries are small, e.g., employ fewer than five workers, those in Athens had an average of 7.6 employees in 1979 and 7.2 in 1973. Overall, the average size of Athenian industries increased from 5.7 in 1969 to 6.5 employees in 1973, signaling a slight, though by no means overwhelming, concentration of some activities.

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out.[23] The tobacco industry, lying in the plains north of Athens, is dominated by Greeks.[24] The petrochemical industry has heavy foreign investment, employs large numbers of workers, and is dominated by the United States, Great Britain and Italy. The basic metal industry, likewise, has attracted heavy amounts of foreign capital, and is dominated by France, Switzerland and the United States. Rubber and plastics have a heavy concentration of foreign capital, which is not adequately reflected in these statistics. For instance, 72 percent of all those employed in the rubber and plastics industry work in shops with fewer than five employees. The real situation is that there are one or two major plants, e.g., U.S. and British tire manufacturers, alongside a number of small Greek entrepreneurs who are producing plastic drinking cups, wine carriers, and the like. In short, foreign capital in the form of the multinational corporation dominates the capital-intensive industries and those industries linked to raw materials, e.g., bauxite, chrome and so forth. There is some production by multinationals for the local markets, as in the case of automobile and truck tires, cement for the building boom, and pharmaceuticals.[25]

*The Common Market*

In 1979, after 20 years of negotiation, Greece became a full member of the Common Market. The move was greeted with enthusiasm by the Greek government. Concerned solely with the problem of economic stability and Greece's potential for growth, Candilis argued that a positive balance of payments was essential for development.[26] As already indicated, Greece has managed to make up a large part of its deficits through U.S. aid, from foreign remittances, and so forth, but that it constantly runs a balance of payments deficit. The Greek government has singled out the loans resulting from partnership in the Common Market as one of the major benefits.[27]

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23. For instance, in 1973, the average number of workers per enterprise in Athens was 127 for the tobacco industry, 20.2 for petrochemicals, 58.1 for basic metals, 9.9 for rubber and plastics, 15.2 for textiles, and 16.4 for paper.

24. Hummen, *Greek Industry in the European Community, op.cit.*, p. 77.

25. One more form of multinational domination should be noted for it involves little investment. The Greek shoe industry is flourishing and continues to be dominated by small family firms, although there have been consistent attempts to consolidate in this area. Greek shoes are sent all over the world, as are Brazilian shoes. But the small Greek entrepreneur does not send his shoes directly to Macy's or to K-Mart; he sends them to a middleman, who is often a buyer for large international corporations. The market, then, is controlled by those in the developed countries, by the discount houses and department stores that buy in volume. The Greek entrepreneur is, then, in many respects a wage-laborer for the multinational corporation that controls the market.

26. Wray O. Candilis, *The Economy of Greece, 1944-1966* (New York, 1968).

27. "In particular, Greece's net gain from the Community Budget during the first year after accession (after discharging all its contributory obligations such as its share of assistance towards 56 developing countries) is expected to amount to some $110 million, reaching a total of about $1,800 million for the whole five-year transition period and continuing thereafter (at current prices) at a level of some $675 million annually. Immediate access to substantial budgetary funds will be of particular value in enabling Greece to proceed at once with an intensified program of farm support and regional development." Cf. Embassy of Greece, *Greece, A Monthly Record, op.cit.*

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Hirtiris, however, has noted that the loans would provide for a short-term covering of the deficit in the balance of payments, and that in the long run the Common Market might offer an expanded market for Greek goods, *if* Greek industry were internally restructured so as to make it as efficient as its European counterpart. However, the abolition of tariffs would probably weaken Greek industry and contribute to a worsening of the balance of payments. Thus, the "small size of the country's area and population means that a wide range of products, and especially manufactures, cannot be produced within the country, since the internal market is not large enough to absorb the supply of those industries which require large-scale production and also because the country cannot afford the advanced technology which other developed countries apply in their production." [28] Furthermore, he has predicted a lowering of the tariff barriers, causing an influx of consumption products to Greece that would lead to a continued worsening of the balance of payments problem. In short, Common Market membership would threaten the stability of the economy.

The health of the Greek economy under Common Market membership is predicated on a number of assumptions. The Royal Hellenic Research Foundation, in assessing the benefits of membership, noted, "An optimistic forecast regarding the effect of Greece's association with the Community would be based on the thought that the pressure from the gradual abolition of tariff walls would lead to an improvement in existing production units, while the advantage of a wider free market combined with the fact that the Greek market will remain protected for a considerable length of time would make Greece attractive to foreign capital and entrepreneurship." [29] They go on to note that a less optimistic forecast would be called for if this incentive were insufficient to attract foreign entrepreneurs for it would mean that "the pressure of foreign competition would eventually overwhelm Greek industry." Between the time this was written in 1968 and the time Greece joined the Common Market, there was no real evidence to suggest that Greek industry as a whole was becoming more efficient or that foreign capital was going to flow to Greece to fight foreign capital from the Common Market. Furthermore, the tariff reductions finally agreed on will put Greek products at a distinct disadvantage.

Hummen, analyzing changes in tariffs during the period that Greece was a Common Market associate, found that each lowering of tariffs benefited the developed Common Market countries and not Greece, and that the reductions that remain to be granted to the Common Market are much larger than those that have already been granted. For those imports that are particularly price-sensitive, such as textiles and clothing, or mineral manufactures, Hummen predicts an even greater flow of imports into Greece, which will drive the marginal producer out of business, and hinder

28. Theodore Hirtiris, *Trade Effects of Economic Association with the Common Market: The Case of Greece* (New York, 1972).

29. Royal Hellenic Research Foundation, *Long-Term Prospects for the Greek Economy: A Forecast of Developments in the Next Fifteen Years* (Athens, 1968), p. 42.

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the development of "infant" industries. [30] This will mean a cutback in Greek production that will hit hardest those small family firms that cannot deal with price competition.

In the case of the U.S.-dominated chemical industry, the market structure (monopoly capitalism) neutralizes the price mechanism. In Hummen's words, "In trade between the Greek subsidiary and a company in the Common Market belonging to the same concern, the tariff-induced price reduction is not passed on but is added to the profit margin at a level equivalent to the tariff rate. On these markets tariff reductions have the same effect as a one-time subsidy."[31]

Using a model to predict the effect of Common Market membership on specific Greek industries, Nugent concluded that comparative advantage would be found for Greece in agriculture, textiles, chemicals, metal products and transport equipment.[32] Nugent's industrial list, however, omitted a number of factors that were included by Hummen in a similar analysis. Using modeling techniques similar to Nugent, Hummen saw a comparative advantage in footwear, ores, clothing, minerals, non-ferrous metals, petroleum products, and negative advantages in everything from textile fabrics to furniture, explosives, dyes and machinery. There are a number of risks in interpreting the results of such models, as both Hummen and Nugent stress, because they do not take into account such things as potential trade; they count only those industries that participated in foreign trade at the time the data was gathered. Overall, however, the general insight they yield is an accurate reflection of what is happening in Greece. Nugent, unlike Hummen, includes agriculture in his calculations, and concludes that the benefits from Common Market association will be positive. This might lead to a slight rationalization of farming in Greece, but, given the geographic conditions, mechanized agribusiness is impossible there. Farm families will continue to participate in a market economy as they always have. But the Greek government foresaw considerable benefits to farmers from Common Market membership.[33] Although there will be larger markets, and a different system of distribution, the farmers' essential economic roles will remain the same.

That entry into the Common Market will reproduce the present structure of the Greek economy can be seen by examining the indices of comparative advantage. Those industries likely to have an advantage are those already involved in the export sector, and which have achieved their advantage by

30. Hummen, *op.cit.*, p. 78.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
32. Nugent, *Programming the Optimal Development of the Greek Economy, op.cit.*
33. "Greek farmers (who currently receive prices for many of their products which are well below Common Market levels) will derive direct and very substantial benefits from the application of the Community's Agricultural Policy.... For Greece, where agriculture has traditionally been hampered by small average land holdings, relatively low mechanization and the limitations of a small domestic market, some of the major gains from membership in the Common Market in the agricultural sector will result from the restructuring of land use and the modernization of farming methods, marketing and distribution." Cf. Embassy of Greece, *Greece, op.cit.*

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making use of either intensive, cheap family labor, or cheap resources. The multinationals dominate in such areas as metalliferous ores, non-ferrous metals, petroleum and petroleum products, crude minerals and in many other areas, where there are advantages from association with the Common Market. At the present time, for instance, the Greek Association of Industrialists reports that the export share of firms set up with participation of foreign capital accounts for 70 percent of all industrial exports.[34] Common Market involvement for Greece, then, is going to benefit the multinationals, and will cause serious problems for those involved in price-sensitive activities. With marginal producers squeezed, there will be rising unemployment.

Some of the standard solutions proposed for Greece's unemployment problems (and Greek workers temporarily employed in Northern Europe are to be sent home by some of the Common Market countries) are: the shift from cottage industry to service industry (repairs); a linking of medium-size industrial firms to the export sector; the merging of enterprises to gain access to markets; the rationalization of the production process; and shifting to the marketing of information. In short, becoming like the developed countries. But that is not possible. What is taking place instead, and some of these suggestions would exacerbate this problem, is a transformation of Greek industry and the Greek labor force into a "support" system for Western Europe. Greek farmers can provide cheap food for Common Market countries. Greece can provide raw materials (bauxite, magnesite, lignite, chrome-iron, perlite, asbestos, copper, zinc) to a resource-poor Europe, provide cheap shoes and clothing and, finally, provide a place for 5 million tourists to amuse themselves annually. Andreas Papandreou foresaw the union of Greece with the Common Market as having "onerous economic and political consequences" and said that this will simply complete the process of "Greek dependence on the metropolitan centers of the West."[35]

How has Greece been cast into the role of a state permanently on the periphery, whose population is to serve as a surplus labor force for the whole of the Common Market? The present political structure is a result of unique historical forces which shaped value patterns, the economy, and the overall social formation in such a way that the presence and impact of the multinationals after the 1960s make sense in this context.

34. Hummen, *Greek Industry in the European Community, op.cit.*, p. 47.
35. Embassy of Greece, *Greece, op.cit.*

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# GREECE OUT OF THE COMMON MARKET?

## by Eleni Mahaira-Odoni

McNall's analysis of the role of multinationals on Greek development leads him to reasonably pessimistic conclusions in connection with Greece's prospects on the eve of accession to the Common Market. The pros and cons of complex economic factors involved have long been debated in the Greek and European press and throughout a wide spectrum of international professional and official pamphlets. Indeed, all research so far, including works that conclude in support of Greece, make no secret of the fact that, given Greece's present economic structure, accession will create difficult problems for the agricultural as well as the industrial sectors, both of which lag behind EEC standards, largely because of heavy dependency (the role of multinationals) and despite impressive development indices of recent decades.

Therefore, from the viewpoint of Greece's current economic structure and the trends that EEC policy has followed so far, McNall is probably right in depicting rather negative prospects for Greece.

However, if we look at Greek entry as more than the mere addition of an immutable economic factor to another equally immutable economic entity (the EEC), the situation is quite different. The fact is that Greece is undergoing necessary internal changes in its political and economic structures — as a matter of complying with EEC laws — at a time when the EEC's composition is also being challenged by progressive alliances seeking deep transformations in political and economic policy.

Various studies by the Greek Communist party (interior) and other democratic left alliances have weighed their support for EEC entry against a much broader range of factors than a sterile economic analysis would readily yield.[1] There are two salient features of the case for Greek accession. First, there is the lack of any real alternative alliances for a country practically unable to fee itself (not to mention feeding Europe cheaply, as McNall expects), an economy of already expensive tastes and habits, an expanding manufacturing trade, a swelling middle class, a socio-cultural affinity for Western Europe and, above all, a deep financial crisis with an unprecedented national deficit and rate of inflation. Second, there is the current Greek economic crisis (which in real terms translates as the inability of Greeks to reconcile their 20th century concumer expectations with their 19th century productive habits and opportunities), coupled with Greece's obligation to "harmonize" its legal, economic and political structure with the EEC, may yet prove the only means for exploding the mounting contradictions that made it

1. From a vast number of daily publications, see in particular the special EEC issue of *Syncrona Themata*, No. 5 (Summer 1979), pp. 3-58, and *Politis*, No. 9 (February 1977), pp. 12-37, and p. 88.

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possible for multinationals and others to ravage Greece in the first place.

In other words, it is finally becoming apparent that the long-standing political dependency that earned Greece its modern statehood and which, through education, was translated into systems of legal inequality and economic dependency is the backbone of the country's limping economic profile. Thus, unless Greece undertakes deep structural changes, which can only mean politically motivated and government initiated decisions for pervasive change in its legal codes, banking practices, economic incentives policy as well as education, the country will become totally unmanageable for any government, left or right, whether it joins the EEC or not.

To illustrate the reactionary and chaotic character of the Greek financial, banking and legal structures, a cursory look at some conditions now inhibiting the growth of small and medium enterprises would reveal some scandalous facts: the Greek Civil Code and tax systems heavily privilege and protect real estate investments for dowry purposes — an anachronism whose catastrophic effects are reinforced by the parallel absence of bank loans policy for widely available productive investments. In this context, worrying about the effect of EEC accession on the small and medium firms, however legitimate in theory, is a complete mystification of already existing causes of crisis and ill-fated practice. Therefore, it seems that nothing short of overhauling the all-powerful structure of the Greek state will do and, in this context, EEC accession may well prove the only catalyst.

This realization is probably among the major reasons for PASOK's latest political acrobatics: its leader, Andreas Papandreou, whose dire pronouncements McNall loves to invoke, has just decided that after a two-year abstention from all EEC activity in Greece his party would now join the EEC parliamentary committee after all, in an effort to "strengthen existing and rising progressive and socialist alliances in Western Europe."[2] If nothing else, Papandreou is no fool: as the possibility of winning the next elections gets closer, he knows enough Greek history to understand that, once in power, it will take a lot more than slogans to stay there and to make a genuine transition to socialism. And in the last analysis, Papandreou's fresh reading of prospects for a united socialist Europe allows enough room for believing that, in joining it, Greece might have more than a fighting chance.

2. Reported by the daily *Kathimerini*, April 1, 1980.

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# MUSIC AND THE NEW MUSIC: IN MEMORY OF PETER SUHRKAMP[1]

## by Theodor W. Adorno

"The best in that which is new
responds to an old need."
— *Paul Valery*

In one of my last conversations with Peter Suhrkamp, he asked me in regard to the titles of several essays included in my *Klangfiguren*: "Why do you people still go on talking about New Music? In painting any such designation was dropped a long time ago, but in music you bend every muscle to keep this one alive?" I should like to try to answer my dead friend as well as I can. In so doing, of course, I cannot simply restrict myself to mere matters of nomenclature; I shall have to record something of those complex considerations which his question called forth as well, in the hope that in so doing I shall touch upon something of essence to the issue involved. It must be said at the outset that this petrified name is indeed suspicious. It probably came into being in some connection with the German designation "International Society for New Music" — "Internationale Gesellschaft für neue Musik" — which — beginning in the early 1920s — undertook to include in its sphere everything which distanced itself to any degree from the Neo-German and Impressionist movements and the remnants of the other older schools of the nineteenth century.[2] How limited the binding force of that designation was is indicated quite simply by the English name of the same organization, "International Society for Contemporary Music" (ISCM), which employs the neutrally-chronological "contemporary" rather than the polemic "new." And it was this concept to which, by and large, the programs of both organizations corresponded. If the works performed at those festivals were repeated today, only a very few of them would fit the present-day concept of New Music in terms of quality. Innumerable concerti grossi and suites, wind serenades and motoric products were heard and, following the violent stripping away of the gloss of older music, they sounded as old-fashioned and possibly still more boring than anything by Raff or

1. "Musik und neue Musik" was first given by Adorno as a lecture on North German Television in May 1960. It appeared in print in *Merkur* H. 147 (Jg. 14, H. 5), pp. 410-425 and was included in *Quasi una Fantasia* (Frankfurt, 1963), pp. 339-364. Translation by Wes Blomster, who also prepared the annotation.

2. The Neo-German School was a group of composers who declared themselves followers of Franz Liszt in the mid-19th century, in opposition to the "conservatism" which they saw in the adherence of Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms to the principles of Viennese Classicism. They promoted what they saw as progressive composition in Berlioz and Wagner. Until 1892 they were in control of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik,* a journal founded by Schumann and of great importance and influence within musical circles.

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Draeseke.[3] The only works which have retained anything of the aura of the alien and essentially different are the products of the Viennese School and the youthful works of Stravinsky and Bartok — all looked upon in those days as eccentric. And, of course, forty years ago a good deal of work which was nothing more than luke-warm or mediative might well have partaken of this aura. This concept of New Music appears to share in the fate of obsolesence, experienced by this concept so often in the course of history. That talk about New Music continues today as indefatigably as though it were a category unto itself, without relation to anything which existed previously or to that which still brings an audience into opera houses, concert halls and in front of the radio, has come today to benefit from the resistance against and the neutralization of New Music, rather than to advance it as a watch-word. The expression can actually provoke the idiotic question "Is that still music?" with which the indignant listener dispenses with the burden of his own indignation by classifying that which he hates as a unique affair which might well have its right to existence alongside of many other things, some of which have established themselves through the ages; he views these things, however, as something of concern only to the specialist, because they do not fall under any approved definition. The word "New Music" confirms the relegation of this music — in terms of institutional or yellow-page categories — to studios, special organizations and presentations, thus involuntarily limiting its own claim to truth and consequent general validity, while without such organized help this music would atrophy hopelessly. One is reminded of the division of musical programs into "classical" and "popular" which in the United States makes available to any particular group of fans whatever they find of interest, thus largely relieving them of the effort of selection, which is reduced to a matter of simple alternatives.[4] Meanwhile, most of that against which the music once directed its polemic attacks — at least on this side of the Iron Curtain — has died out; it would hardly occur to anyone today to compose in the manner of Bausznern and Hausegger, of Georg Schumann and Max Trapp, or even to exhibit their trash in concerts.[5] This, however, casts a shadow of total negativity upon the word "New Music." The pathos of the word is now without opposition and the department of New Music indicates that it is by no means uneffected by the harmlessness of its situation.

Nonetheless — in contrast to painting — it is no accident that the name "New Music" has held its ground. This designation makes reference to the experience of an abrupt advance in quality, while analogous advances in

3. Joseph Joachim Raff (1822-1882), composer of the Neo-German School who worked closely with Liszt in Weimar; important further as a teacher and writer, particularly in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Felix Draeseke (1835-1913); composer, journalist, teacher of piano and composition. He later moved towards neo-classicism.

4. Adorno used English words and expressions throughout this essay; in translation they are enclosed in quotation marks. Since the phrase "New Music" is essentially a concept popular since about 1925, it is capitalized here.

5. Georg Schumann (1866-1952), choral composer, conductor and teacher; President of the German Academy of Arts in 1934. Max Trapp (1887-1971), teacher and composer whose work shows a strong influence by Richard Strauss and Max Reger.

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painting have been distributed over a lengthy period of time and further extend back beyond those in music. Even in the most recent developments music has revealed itself as a late art — a "late comer" — within which everything proceeds more rapidly. Imprinted upon the name "New Music" is the fact that from the time of its beginnings the tonal system underwent change; painting, on the other hand, hardly knew anything corresponding to tonality. Its relation to something of objective nature which it then undertook to portray — a relation broken through in modern art — extends in temporal scope beyond the tonal epoch of music; from a second perspective this relation by no means circumscribes the material upon which painting itself relies in terms of forms and colors. A musical language which renounces the elements of the triad (once viewed as a matter of second nature), the major and minor scales, and the distinction between consonance and dissonance, along with all the other categories which resulted from these practices either directly or indirectly, obviously involves much more than do modern innovations in painting. Furthermore, such innovations were communicated more easily in painting because pictures can quite literally be bought, sold and owned, thus asserting themselves to a public via the market much more drastically than musical scores could ever do. This development, to be sure, did not take place from one day to the next; the elements and problematic demands of New Music as a whole arose out of traditional music. All this changes nothing in the situation that the majority of people — as a result of experiences dating back to early childhood, through musical education and through the immeasurable dominance of the music to which they are incessantly subjected — react to New Music as something which deviates from their fixed category of ideas. With habits of hearing which — in their opinion — are sufficient for everything from Monteverdi to Richard Strauss, they are unable to gain access to Schoenberg, Webern or Boulez. The changes in music involve not simply matters of style, content and the specific contours of various works, but rather their presuppositions and the language which they speak. All of these cannot be compared with earlier innovations such as those of the Mannheim School, Viennese Classicism or of Wagner. For that reason, in the case of New Music, the leveling reference to the fact that every innovation has succumbed to the historical process and that every significant new phenomenon has at first been rejected as something unusual is impotent, threadbare and apologetic. Even Strauss' bolder strokes — capers, in truth — did indeed cast the entire system into confusion, but only in order to affirm it all the more emphatically — as he did in the final section of his *Electra*. Even Max Reger's panchromaticism, in the face of which the concept of a firm tonal key lost all constructive meaning through incessant modulation, firmly retains the tonal system in the construction of its individual sounds and their immediate relation to each other; nowhere does it offend the taboos of sacred expectations. Certainly everything down to the most recent finely machined works launched in Darmstadt under the name of New Music corresponds totally only in rare instances to the basic concept involved — i.e., that of a

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language cleansed of all tonal rudiments and organized out of its own resources without regard for an external scheme. Everything looked upon as New Music for the past forty years — except for the products of the Viennese School — is thoroughly permeated by remnants of the tonal system; it still remains to be seen whether music will ever be able to free itself totally of this relation — no matter how negative it might be — as long as it clings to regulations such as the tempered octave. Indeed, it is questionable whether music should even desire this liberation.

Nonetheless and not without some justification, the compromising products of the neo-classic heirs and imitators of Stravinsky and Hindemith have been included in the category of New Music. It was felt that in them tonality continued a shadowy vegetative existence, no longer of any primary force and in many cases seemingly quoted by a consciousness seeking firm ground and order beyond that still attainable to it; all of this is perhaps not without some relation to that deceptive similarity to models of the objective world of which Picasso made use in his few neo-classicistic years. The effect of the irrevocable turn in the development of music extended into regions where one would have preferred to deny it. Difficult as it is to designate a specific year or work as the end of tonality, what really happened is ignored if — as is often attempted by well-meaning and naive musicians — one immediately insists upon the principle unity and continuity of all music, demonstrated by means of the endless intimate conversation of geniuses through the centuries from Bach to Schoenberg. Neither Bach nor Schoenberg cared for the word atonal; they found it a defamation and pure nonsense if it were understood literally as music without tones. It was, however, probably Schoenberg's uniquely conservative posture which played a role in his rejection of something which as a fanfare was of approximately the same value as once were the Gueux[6] and — forty years ago — Dada. "Atonal" rather precisely registers the shock exerted by New Music — a shock which is essentially its property and which became moderate only in the moment in which there was no longer any talk of atonality, but rather of dodecaphony, as though this were a new and positive system. It is, by the way, to Schoenberg's credit that he also opposed this reification of a technique which, after all, only set out to help the ear, helplessly abandoned upon a sea of new sounds, the discovery of which Webern attributed to Schoenberg almost fifty years ago. To speak about atonal music remains more to the point than the affirmative and dogmatic belief that a new security has been found in the row technique, the dubious character of which is revealed from time to time in philosophy. A great deal of recent music — particularly that resulting from the direction

6. The "Gueux" was a group of Low Country noblemen who stood in sharp opposition to Philipp II of Spain and to Alba, Philipp's agent among them, following the intensification of the Inquisition in the second half of the sixteenth century. They took their name, Beggars, when a representative of the Government, observing them, commented: "Ce ne sont que des gueux." Adorno's reference to them in terms of "fanfare" probably refers to their self-identification through a small silver or copper beggar's bowl which they wore on belt or cap. Reference to this period ties in with the later mention in the essay of Schiller's *Don Carlos*.

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taken by John Cage — could certainly be called atonal rather than dodecaphonic.

Sociologically, there is something to be said in favor of the term "New Music." For while there is scarcely any longer any production that can remove itself from the objective influence of New Music, reproduction and consumption of music — aside from cleanly isolated sectors set aside as the reserve of the new — continue to draw their supplies from the storehouse of tonality. It is precisely the separation of New Music from this sphere, the astronomical distance between its completely developed language today and the traditional idiom, which promotes the petrification of the seemingly eternal. In the realms of elevated and admittedly low entertainment music — and in their direct extension, the music industry — probably less is admitted from the other realm than was the case before the strata of musical history were departmentalized and understood in terms of such organization. The classics of modern music, relegated to a pantheon where homage is paid to them every now and then, change nothing in this situation; their installation there results in their falsification. The all-powerful culture industry cries "stop" and restricts itself to its own type of invariables in much the same way as it does in its non-musical media — as, for example, in the film. A closed system is involved. The current tendency to reduce life to a set of basic ontological components — in general, those involving the human being — can well be viewed with suspicion as a function of dehumanization. A system which tends toward hermetic capsulization and well-founded distrust of its own truth fears every unregimented sound — even if it is the most impotent one — just as much as the Third Reich feared the modest freedom of thought of Marquis Posa.[7] The more problematic the total situation has become in the face of available technical and human forces, the more threateningly it watches over those engaged in its development; the more basically the chance for improvement seems to have been missed and compromised by its usurpers, the more indefatigably it is drilled into helplessly encircled humanity that things cannot be different than they are and that the basic categories of the status quo are indeed those of being — true and immutable. This further extends — without the individual agencies and responsible individuals necessarily being consciously aware thereof — into all details of cultural policy. The obvious reference to the intellectual level of those surrounded, who desire nothing but that which is drilled into them and further fear the threat to their comfort — in which they really do not believe anyhow — contained in anything which might penetrate this veil, is all too easily made. New Music is still able to assert itself as new insofar as it does not permit its assimilation into this fateful circle. For this reason, the critical and aesthetic self-reflection in which this music engages is objective and at the same time socially critical.

7. In Act III, Scene 10 of Schiller's drama, *Don Carlos*, Marquis Posa exhorts Philipp II: "Sire, grant freedom of thought!"

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The relation of New Music to society, its obstructed or planned reception, further affects its content. It could easily be imagined that its nonconformism alone, the fact that it is not accepted by the broader strata of the population, would be aspects far too abstract to permit any descriptive statement upon its specific essence. The non-objectivity of this music, determined by its non-conceptual material, its obstinacy toward tractable theses makes it possible to establish protective hiding places for its insubordinate product; it has every reason to be thankful for this. Furthermore, New Music shares with all articulated art — the idea of which simply cannot be reduced to an ignominious denominator — the absence of that which is called a message. This, however, by no means implies that its content is neutral. Reactionaries of all degrees, who expressed their organized indignation against this music in the days before Hitler and who are again today crawling forth from their holes, were more aware of this than those friends who thought they were achieving something essential for New Music through counting out rows and other innocuously positivistic subaltern services. This music suffers rather at the hands of the well-known and old-familiar from which it is so vastly different. It stands in impotent opposition to the course of the world; its gesture is aggressive. Its only intention is to obey its own law and to rebel against that of market demand; thus it gives concrete expression to its potential subject which is concealed even from the music itself. The characteristics of this subject are manifested in the prohibitions of this music. Even Schoenberg, who would have liked so intensely simply to be a great composer in the manner of those predecessors whom he honored, noticed this. When a Hollywood mogul of good intentions who wanted to engage him for a film score received him with a compliment about his "lovely music," the composer reputedly lashed out at him: "My music is not lovely." No commission was given. The aggression which New Music, still after thirty years, continues to direct against established norms and in which something of Surrealist assault survives has its specific tone: it is threatening. Its individual sounds are in no way the manifestation of a state of feeling. This music is produced rather through bypassing the subject. It is no coincidence that enraged letters from listeners associate many of these compositions with atomic bombs and cosmic catastrophes; among today's advanced scores many literally sound — as Americans would say — as though they were "out of this world". This tone increases along with the lack of concern for those cozy traces of the human which came to characterize traditional music; this is achieved through integral construction of New Music. Its tone is that of correct consciousness of the reified alienation and depersonalization of all that which is imposed upon humankind, in the final analysis, of the inability of the sensory powers to adjust to this imposition in any way. The source of the terror in New Music lies in the fact that the anxiety which might mediate between the subject and that which is happening to the subject is no longer rendered: that which is imposed upon humankind is enlarged into an immoderate fate. Only through the imageless

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image of continuing dehumanization — wordlessly — does this music preserve the image of humanity; wherever it, obedient to the phrase, wishes to serve people — perhaps the only instance in which he still speaks immediately out of this music — it transfigures what is and thus lowers itself to the level of a heart-warmer. Only by taking upon itself the odium of dehumanization does it honor the admonition toward autonomy, to the pure configuration of the concern itself in all its impulses which had come to accompany music throughout its subjective phase following its severance from ritual; only by no longer being "lovely" does it offer any presentment of beauty. The expression of threat in this music is unmistakable wherever it further casts off its immanent lawfulness as an illusion, delivering itself rather up to chance. The piano concerto by John Cage, consequent and meaningful only in its taboo regarding any idea of coherence of musical meaning, offers an extreme example of the music of catastrophe.

Along with the change in its social function, music in itself has undergone a change on its innermost level. Bourgeois music — even in its highest products — remained decorative and made itself a matter of easy comfort for mankind, not only for the immediate listeners whose souls Beethoven — according to his famous dictum — wanted to ignite into flame, but even objectively and far beyond this through its affirmation of the ideas of humanism. This music was sent packing because it degenerated into an ideology, because its reflection of the world in a positive spirit — indeed the demand for a better world often found in it — became a lie which justified everything evil going on in the world. The termination of such an agreement between music and society penetrates into the most delicate sublimations of feeling for musical form. This gives us the right to talk about New Music.

Yet this is not without its limits. One becomes aware of them when confronted by the hydra heads of the question: Is that still music? For there is no answer possible but an emphatic yes. This answer need not content itself with a retreat to definitions based upon physics or psychology such as those which assert that even here it is a matter of sounds, not noises, and that the essential concern is still for tonal relations no matter how they might be ordered. Meanwhile, noises — which have always been the ferments of musical effects — have been dragged into tonal relations within a continuum of transitions hardly thought possible previously. New Music nonetheless remains music, because all of its categories, non-identical with traditional ones, are at the same time identical with them, because in its refusal, in everything which it forbids itself, the power of the forbidden is preserved. This is mediated through craftsmanship, through the métier, the concept of which stands high among its contemporary exponents; indeed, at times it becomes a fetish. Nothing is tolerated which cannot be articulated down to the very last note. If musical quality really depends upon the tonal formal construction of a composition from beginning to end, without remnants of any type of crude and unformed surfaces, then New Music relentlessly appropriates for itself this criterion. This is not even necessarily its

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achievement. It is rather that the disappearance of the schemes of every a priori syntax and grammar and of the markings of traditional vocabulary forces this music unremittingly to produce relationships purely from within itself. These are no longer made available to it from without and it would have to refuse them as heteronomous even if they were offered as a gift. To all of this New Music can do justice only through extreme technical responsibility, through technique understood in the radical sense of realization and not from the comfortable perspective of domination over supposedly probate means. The energy demanded by such an effort, however, is derived by this music from that already organized by all older music — in many cases behind its tonal façade.

Just as strong as this responsibility, to be sure, is the allergic sensitivity of this music even towards the distant derivatives of tradition. There is nothing from the past which benefits New Music in undestroyed form. This is perhaps seen most outspokenly in electronic music, whose logical exponents avoid everything reminiscent of common sonic patterns and effects which threaten to deprive their new material of that which is unique within it and which distinguishes it qualitatively from traditional instrumental resources. Out of this allergy towards the residue of traditional musical language a new musical language again takes shape; today the reaction against everything which is false within New Music is incomparably more precise than it was some thirty years ago. Here spontaneous agreement is encountered. Riegl's thesis on the extinction of a binding and obligatory stylistic force is as antiquated today in music as it is in painting;[8] the growing proximity between all types of modern music — even that of various nations — obeys the logic of the situation. The more consequently the individual artist surrenders to this — without seeking orientation through some pre-designed generality — the closer the artist comes to the idea of style, the scope of which extends beyond individual artists. Today a canon both of the possible and the impossible can be discerned; it is per se hostile to all protection. Even the convergence of music and painting under the sign of integral construction is growing radical. Stravinsky's treatment of time as though it were space — perhaps a confused dream of something in the future — , an effort which remained in his hands a pseudo-metamorphosis, is becoming serious. Through serial manipulation, time itself becomes disposable and, in a certain sense, time is captured. Time, no longer open, seems transformed into space. However, this is not achieved through violence. It is rather the absorption of the dialectic force contained in the heritage of Viennese Classicism and preserved by the Schoenberg School. Every illusion of the static is renounced. Berg with his great architectural talent — and Webern too at times — organized his phrases from a superior perspective, just as the painter organizes the surfaces of the canvas. Upon first hearing, Stockhausen's *Zeitmasse* — immune to the means of musical statics

8. Alois Riegl (1858-1905), Viennese art historian, whose approach to art history was from the perspective of development rather than aesthetic evaluation. He was responsible for the reevaluation of the art of periods of decline, as, for example, of late antiquity.

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and displaced repetition — arouse the impression of a mammoth exhaustively composed cadenza rather than that of a process in any familiar sense. This aspect, by the way, is responsible for the obsolesence of the category of the idea — "Einfall" — as a pre-architectonic impulse; recently a wide range of musicians has directed attention to this. Not to be ignored is the abysmal difficulty involved in the fact that the continuum of time is not simply in itself "simultaneous" in any literal sense as rational organization implies. One can hardly escape from the idea that this organization of time developed from below, from the animation of the impulse; this designates objectively — from the perspective of material — the necessary location of the subject in music and at the same time that with which it has to come to terms at present. One might even speculate whether the integral rationality which music so intensely desires can be reconciled with the dimension of time at all, whether rationality — as the force of balance between that which is similar and that which is quantitative — does not actually negate everything dissimilar and qualitative from which the dimension of time can in no way be separated. It is not a matter of chance that all tendencies towards rationalization — the real tendencies far more than the aesthetic ones — seek the abolition of traditional procedures and thereby virtually the abolition of history. Integration, the exhaustive construction of time, might well threaten the life of time itself, as this is seen anthropologically desirable in an epoch the subjects of which increasingly renounce memory. At any rate, these tendencies affect that which might possibly be called the ontology of the arts. While music in terms of its manner of behavior approximates painting, the paintings of tachism move close to the methods of music. This is to be observed even in the richness of individual valeurs — alien to traditional painting — and to a degree in the grouping of notes and tones and in the drive towards increased dynamics.

The new musical language which takes the form of a positive negation of traditional language is not to be degraded to the triviality that something new and different was desired; this is a formula of the philosophy of history which can be applied to everything and therefore to nothing, resulting in the simple tautology that in any development late stages follow upon earlier ones. It is rather the case that New Music is to be understood simultaneously as criticism of traditional music. The enemies thereof are fully aware of this when they shout about disintegration; whoever identifies with New Music should rather take a stand in support of this critical impulse than strive for its integration. This was not necessarily Schoenberg's intention. When, however, he found a famous melody of the nineteenth century — such as the stretta in Verdi's *Trovatore* — unbearable because the major motivic rhythm was obvious to him after the first four bars, something which insulted his musical intelligence through its persistent repetition, he thereby not only unknowingly proclaimed a type of reaction which latently conditions every note of New Music, but further an objective state of affairs. For the ideological impulse of traditional music, its affirmative gesture, concerns not only its posture which indicates that this is the way it is and ought to be, but betrays itself through everlasting

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foolishness, inconsistencies and ruptures. The works of the past are all the more significant the more uncompromisingly they formatively reveal their own negativity rather than hiding it behind the smoothness of sensual movement. This is the foundation of the great stature of late Beethoven. The tonal system and every individual musical impulse could be reconciled just as little as could the totality of bourgeois order with the interests and passions of its subjects; this has left its mark upon all traditional music which set out to affirm precisely that unity. The drive to constitute form through the repetition of entire complexes, the actual course of time which actually forbids repetition, the fixed reification of reprises even in Brahms and Reger is only the most obvious symptom of the enraptured inadequacy of the individual composer in the face of such desire and ability. The law of affirmation had long ceased to provide standards for musical quality. Again and again composers all the way down to Schubert, Chopin, Debussy and Richard Strauss were seduced into conciliation at the expense of the integrity of their scores. The opposition to ingratiation and the suggestion of familiarity to be detected even in high production share in the pathos which chose as its motto "my music is not lovely." Criticism of tradition — as a feeling of perennial discrepancy — was always an ingredient of the bourgeois musical tradition itself, the only tradition capable of imitation. In inner-musical terms — which, in turn, have a social aspect — this explains the discontinuity of musical history. Historical tempo has accelerated in racket-like fashion during the last hundred years on a whole, and even more so during the last thirty years. At the same time discontinuity has decreased; according to the principle of increased rationality itself, more and more links of historical mediation have been swallowed up. Disproportionalities between the liberated historical tendency and the possibility of its appropriation by means of living experiences must not be misused for the justification of that which was lost along the way. If the break with tradition has become definitive today, the development of this tradition in the past was already fractured; for that reason the concept of so-called intellectual-historical development within the modern history of music — beginning around 1600 — is so inappropriate. From that caesura on, music did not simply continue a rampant process of organic growth, but attempted rather at the same time to gain control over itself in agreement with the tendencies toward rationalization of the bourgeois epoch. A programmatic effort — the proclamation of the new — is to be noted all the way from Caccini's *Nuove Musiche* all the way down to the Wagnerian art work of the future;[9] even the late middle ages played an ars nova off against the ars antiqua. This perhaps serves to illuminate the puzzling interweaving of autonomous compositional

9. Guilio Caccini (1550-1618) was a member of the Florentine Camerata in its earliest days. In his own compositions he applied the principles of the ars nova to traditional forms of music. His compositions are collected in *Le Nuove Musiche,* first published in Florence in 1601 and frequently enlarged and reprinted thereafter. The book included a forward to which Adorno here refers.

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elements with pedagogic factors in some of Bach's most powerful instrumental works; they were conceived not only as compositions, but futher as exercises to gain power over musical material in such a way that the difference between the material and the musical subject might some day disappear. Insofar as New Music, taking its departure from traditional music, raises this intention to the level of full consciousness, it fulfills that which all traditional music was trying to do. Although unreconcilable with traditional music, New Music remains true to it nonetheless; as something different, it enters into union with tradition. New Music would be understood most properly as a struggle to do justice to everything which the perceptive compositional ear finds unresolved and antinomical in traditional music. Tradition is not imitation, a reaching into the past or a direct continuation of the past, but rather the ability to grow away from the demands in the past which this past did not fulfill and which left behind their mark in the form of mistakes. New Music assumes responsibility in the face of these demands. Whether its ideas can meet with success in the midst of an antagonistic reality or whether it will simply reproduce again these hereditary contradictions through the totality of its logic, and whether this highest reproduction of contradictions is to be identified totally with the crisis of musical meaning, remains to be seen. From within its own resources music has no power over this situation.

The assertion that New Music still remains music finds itself confronted automatically by the doubt whether it will ever enjoy the broad reception of traditional music, whether its language and its style have any chance of ever becoming that same second nature to the ear which tonal music is — as though this second nature were indisputed good fortune and not in the final analysis something rather infantile. Considerations of this sort which with the trust in God of the philosopher of history leave decisions to the future which are evaded here and now are matters of indignity. In their attitude they strike the pose of the contemplative observer who waits with patient neutrality, while truth clings to the historical moment and the spontaneous experience of it. Nonetheless, during the past half century a good deal of music which once evoked scandal and can now justifiably be included in New Music has established itself: the work of Bartok, Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, *Wozzeck*, early Schoenberg — even atonal pieces such as the George Lieder in *The Book of Hanging Gardens,* op. 15, and *Pierrot Lunaire*, op. 21, are no longer booed and are probably as well understood today as many traditional compositions, the popularity of which — as in the case of the *Missa Solemnis* — is based upon misunderstanding. Whether New Music is destined to rejoice in such slow progress of reception is uncertain; it must seek and fear this at the same time. The concern, however, whether it will some day be able to compete — in terms of general recognition — with traditional music — totally taken over in the meantime by the management of the culture industry — is certainly nothing but a disguise for rancor. This concern is based upon the concept of consistent historical continuity and the continuing progress of

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consciousness, an idea which is revealed as deception by New Music and by the history of music as a whole. Even the naturalness of tonality is an illusion. It was not there from the beginning, but rather established itself in the course of an exhausting process which lasted much longer than the few hundred years marked by the official domination of major and minor. That which preceded tonality — the Florentine ars nova, for example — is as little a matter of nature for the contemporary ear, to which it is totally alien, as one of the late compositions by Webern or anything by Stockhausen is to the proud average listener. The illusion of something natural as camouflage of historical conditions clings irrevocably to that intellect which insists upon a valid realm of reason in the midst of continuing irrationality. Tonality is probably just as transitory as the order of reality to which it belongs. On the other hand, the relation between music and society on a whole must not be imagined as so static and harmonic as it seemed in the days of high liberalism; it is by no means permissible to equate social reception with quality after the model of a market society which rewards and actually defines socially useful work in terms of success. The antithesis of the prohibitions of administered society is part of the content of New Music itself. It would be idle to prophesy whether this music can be redeemed from this antithetical situation and transferred to the future as a secure possession. And even if this is not possible, New Music would not be condemned in the process; the ideal of the aere perennius is itself a bit of ideology. It is no less questionable, however, whether history will continue in this way at all — whether, as the pithy saying would assert, everything genuine will be preserved without loss to posterity. Just as traditional music threatens to perish within the synthetic illiteracy of the culture industry, it is quite possible that the immoderate efforts demanded by New Music of itself and its listeners will run aground on barbarism. Its fate is not in its own hands alone, but will rather be determined in the end by the fateful decay of society; it is upon this situation which every one of its measures looks with fixed eyes. Not for this reason, however, is it possible to assume for New Music an existence beyond society and its tensions in which it will either be tolerated or criticized according to the current division between mass media and ivory tower. Above all, it is not to be terrorized by popular sociology which admonishes it with raised index finger that its responsibility is nothing but irresponsible l'art pour l'art and by the still more cogent anxiety that for this reason it represents a retreat into art nouveau. The shadow of the obsolete, the spleen of obstinate blindness with which New Music digs into its own being falls today upon all art which bears witness to the negative absolute of this world — the world of Auschwitz — but which, however, cannot bear witness in any other way than by establishing itself as an absolute. Moreover, the theologians should be more cautious in their Pharisaism against New Music, insofar as they are not merely engaged in the secret acquisition of organizational putty; if indeed music — as was attempted by both Bach and Webern — is offered up to the godhead, would it then not have to be perfected unto itself, rather than behaving compliantly

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in its relation with human beings? Purely as a phenomenon, music is more than it is; it shares in no objectively pre-ordained transcendence, but rather in one which it imposes upon itself — a negative one through which it risks the loss of itself as well. Schubert's doubt as to whether there really was such a thing as serene music remains. Its content of truth tolerates no positivity and only today does it include this in its own intentions in terms of a possible self-abrogation. Its basic idea is that it finally rid itself of the positive aura expressed as some type of system of mythic delusion — but to say even that about it is almost too positive. However, this idea also has a positive side. the supposed esotericism of New Music would like to do more than assist in giving speech to social content which the speech of society keeps secret. It communicates through non-communication; it would like to blast away everything which closes the ear of human beings who in turn close this ear again themselves. The loss of tension — among all dangers to New Music by no means the slightest — takes place wherever this impulse is surrendered. This impulse might be defined through Brecht's concept of alienation. That it is not concerned with reception, with finding its place as consumer goods, does not mean that it renounces any relation to the subject. It is just that this relation is not one of adjustment, but rather a lasting attempt — no matter how Sisyphus-like in nature — to open these ears. Not even alienation between men and music can be accepted as a fact and hypostatized undialectically; it contains the potential for the removal of this alienation.

Alienation becomes particularly irritating in electronic music. It incites the renewal of all the old phrases about mechanization, destruction of personality, and lifelessness which have accompanied New Music ever since it did away with the established cliches for established feelings. Extreme distrust greets every self-rightous evocation of humanitarianism in the midst of inhuman conditions. There is no word for the noble, the good, the true and the beautiful which has not been disgraced and turned into its opposite; the National Socialists expressed enthusiasm for the house whose roof rested upon columns while torture went on in its basement.[10] Positive values have been demoted to means which prevent any contemplation of them, so that none of them will be realized. Whoever is really concerned about these values must not even utter their names, but rather dismantle them wherever they are held out towards him. In so doing, he surrounds himself with injustice and is looked upon as the enemy of the noble, the good, the true and the beautiful, which, in turn, results in an enforcement of the domination of baseness. Whoever speaks about electronic music must make mention of this circle, otherwise ethical machinery will be set in motion and he will fall into its wheels. Furthermore, he must not be astonished when he nonetheless perceives those heartfelt tones which state that everything is in the hands of

10. In German Adorno's phrase "whose roof rested upon columns" is a direct quotation from the second line of the second stanza of Goethe's poem from the novel *Wilhelm Meister* "Kennst du das Land:" "Auf Säulen ruht sein Dach." The reference would seem intentional within the framework of the noble and the good, concepts in Goethe's poem "Das Göttliche."

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the human being alone, tones which attempt to obscure the degree to which the human being has become an object and — if possible — to fortify his role as an object — above all, as an object of human relations. The public interest in electronic music is sadly shot through with amateurishness. It profits from the universal substitution of means for ends — and for spiritual ends as well — from the delight taken in functioning apparatuses and from the domination of how over what. But care must be taken even with such assertions. No art — and certainly not highly rationalized art — is totally transparent unto itself and often in technical endeavors — cut off from and alien to the spirit — the cunning of reason is at work, the ruse of objective spiritual tendencies which would be impotent if pursued with subjective consciousness rather than with concrete awareness. More plausible is the suspicion that electronics — which after all arose through a technology beyond the actual musical realm — is only an external matter, that is has absolutely nothing to do with the immanent laws of musical development. I have not done any electronic work myself and am therefore not qualified to offer any judgment upon the relation of electronics and the context of musical meaning from the perspective of primary experience. Furthermore, the view of art as natural science is quite far removed from me and I am not able to forget that among the impulses of New Music the one which opposes the stubborn power of reason — self-preserving and dominating nature — was the first; it was nonetheless an impulse unable to achieve aesthetic realization as a result of the no less stubborn insistence upon the immediacy of everything vital. Webern's work is the finest model of this tension. It does, however, seem beyond question to me that electronics now converges with inner-musical developments. There is no need to impute any pre-established harmony by way of explanation: rational control of natural musical material and the rationality involved in the electronic production of sound obey an identical principle in the final analysis. The composer has at his command — at least tendentiously — a continuum of pitch, volume and duration, but — up until today — no possibility for the realization of timbre.[11] An examination of the comprehensive supply of these materials reveals, however, that they remain essentially those found in the symphony orchestra, to a large degree independent of each other and therefore defective. The anarchy of their origin continues to make itself felt; there is still no variety of timbres which can in any way be compared to that of intervals or volume levels. Electronics promises a solution to this lack with which every musician is familiar — in terms, for example, of an insufficient bass range or of connecting links between the major orchestral sections, consisting of strings, woodwinds, brass

11. Developments since this essay have given the electronic composer access to timbre. The relation of timbre to tone color melody, which Adorno mentions in the penultimate paragraph of this essay is more obvious in German, where the respective terms are "Klangfarbe" and "Klangfarbemelodie." The basic idea involved is that a note of the same pitch, volume and duration will be different in character if played by a violin or an oboe — to offer one example. Schoenberg established the shift of instrumental timbres — thus giving rise to the concept "tone color melody" — early in his career, making it an essential structural principle.

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and percussion. Electronic composition is one aspect of the movement of New Music towards the integral continuity of all musical dimensions; not too long ago Stockhausen expressly elevated the creation of a musical continuum to the level of a program. According to remarks in the eleventh number of *Die Reihe*, however, the electronic continuum of timbre is apparently not identical with that of all possible timbres in general — that is to say, it does not necessarily include all non-electronic vocal and instrumental timbres, but involves rather a certain selection in relation to them. For this reason, consequent electronic composers who do not merely view this new medium as a fascination with timbres, but who are interested above all in the constructive application thereof, are concerned that their music be sufficient to the specific conditions of the electronic continuum and that it adjust totally to this material. The first steps in this direction have already been taken; the most penetrating are no doubt those in Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge*. Electronic music is still permeated by reminiscences of other sound media, such as the piano and the organ; this, however, should not be a source of reproach towards it in view of the few years during which electronic composition has been a matter of serious endeavor. Criticism regarding the lack of consequence and absence of modernity provoked by many electronic compositions only serves all too well as a pretext for those who would like to strangle everything modern. There is no need to be dragged into the frenzy of jazz fans regarding electronic products. The entire concern with electronics responds to a need felt within New Music — particularly in the idea of tone color melody — from the very beginning.

The extremes of the New Music of emancipated expressive will and electronic music whose material laws seem to exclude the subjective intervention of the composer — and of the interpreter as well — are tangential and this confirms the objective drive found there towards unity. This drive, in turn, is ample reason, in the end, to liquidate the concept of New Music, not because this music has merged into a more general musica perennis, but because music per se merges into new New Music. It achieves — in terms of ideas — that which was inherent as an idea in all traditional music for that reason the category of New Music as a special category is outdated. It can be used at best only as a rather disreputable heading. The concept grows obsolete because along side it all other production has become impossible and has been reduced to kitsch. The distinction between New Music and music per se has become the distinction between good and bad music.

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# Notes and Commentary:

## WHY AFGHANISTAN?*

### by Viktor Zaslavsky

On February 20, Carter's ultimatum to the Russian government came due: either the Soviet Union pulled its troops out of Afghanistan or the U.S. would irrevocably boycott the Olympics. Predictably, the phrase "relaxation of tension" has reappeared in the speeches of high Soviet authorities, and newspapers all over the world report that the Kremlin wants to begin pulling troops out.

But consider these rumors in light of these facts: (1) During all of January the transportation of fresh troops to Afghanistan has continued; (2) Sakharov has been sent into internal exile and dozens of dissidents have been arrested; (3) Although almost unnoticed in the West, a Politburo's new provision has been received very seriously by Soviet workers: the Central Committee, the Council of Ministers and the Central Council of Unions have approved the decree concerning "The Further Strengthening of Discipline at the Workplace and the Reduction of Labor Turnover in the Country's Economy."

Are these three facts related? Are "well-informed sources" concerning the Soviet leaders' intentions to be taken seriously? Available information and common sense suggest some answers. First of all, the sending of Soviet troops into Afghanistan has not been an unavoidable measure, nor a sudden one. Rather, it is the result of a carefully thought-out policy. Secondly, the West's strong reaction — in particular that of the U.S. — was easily foreseeable and was certainly taken into account by the Soviet leaders. Thirdly, in making such an important decision, the Russian government has very carefully taken into account the international political situation, in the same way that it did in 1968 at the time of the Czech invasion.

Here it is necessary to look back for a moment. The economic reforms began by Brezhnev and Kosygin in 1965 had confronted very early the incompatibility of the country's economic potential and the structure of political power. By reducing the number of workers and by raising the wages of the remaining ones, the reformed enterprises had succeeded in obtaining a significant increase in productivity. At the same time, they began to challenge the rigidity of centralized planning and the intermediate party apparatus whose bureaucratic control was an obstacle to initiatives at the enterprise level. The extension of the reforms would certainly have led to a decline of this intermediary apparatus and to a strengthening of the role of administrators in the enterprises. It would also have required a radical redistribution of investments from the military and space industry to the production of consumer goods, housing and services. In the meantime, some of the less skilled workers would have become unemployed. Yet, the reforms still remained the only effective means for gradually increasing production and for involving workers with the results of their activity.

The reforms found supporters and opponents at all levels of the social structure. In 1968, the leaders who had originally launched it found themselves confronted with a serious choice: either extend the reform, with the inevitable redistribution of power — even political — that that option entailed, or strengthen the political-administrative control over the economy, with the rigid retention of the existing power structure. By deciding to invade Czechoslovakia, the Soviet leadership made its choice. In doing so,

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it did not just deal with a problem of foreign policy. Its choice meant the interruption of the reforms and the extension of the administrative direction over the economy. Political power remained in the hands of the apparatus, whose control over party organizations within the enterprises was strengthened.

Predictably, the abandonment of the reforms ruled out a substantial increase in productivity and a strengthening of discipline at the workplace. For a certain period (1970-74), a favorable demographic situation assured the population a slight increase in the standard of living. But the fundamental problems of economic organization remained unresolved. Beginning with 1975, the regime's attempts to guarantee an even slight but constant increase of individual consumption began to show themselves inefficient. From that time on there has been an increase in the inflationary process, which in the Soviet Union takes particular forms. Wages did increase (because, among other things, the workers used their right to change places of work as a means of pressuring enterprises that cannot do without their labor power), while the cost of housing (unchanged since World War II) and of basic necessities (almost unchanged over the last 15 years) remained stable. Thus, there is a considerable quantity of cash to spend, which, however, cannot be spent because of the lack of consumer goods on the market. The volume of deposits in savings accounts today significantly exceeds the quantity of food and consumer goods that the Soviet economy can provide. Long lines to purchase even the most common items such as detergent and toilet paper remain typical features of everyday life. Over the last few years, in some regions, rationing has even been imposed on some food items (especially meat). The importance of the black market has grown enormously. The fact that the population has a lot of money that cannot be spent leads to an additional disincentive to work. Thus, the economic situation is highly unstable and calls to do something about it are made ever more frequently.

The poor harvest of 1979 was yet another signal that it was necessary to take measures. Finally, the central committee adopted a resolution whose general meaning was rather clear: a reform leading to a liberalization of economic life was once again a real prospect. Again, the possibility emerged to choose a policy that might raise the quality of life by transferring part of the resources devoted to military and space programs to the development of light industry, housing and the importation of consumer goods.

The occupation of Afghanistan suddenly cancelled all of these hopes. As in 1968, the military elites and heads of the armament industries, along with the general inclination to retain unchanged existing power relations, have prevailed over reformist tendencies. The invasion of Afghanistan demonstrates how, if necessary, an international crisis and its consequences may be easily and advantageously used to safeguard power in the hands of a few.

In the eyes of Soviet leaders, the measures adopted by the U.S. do not present serious threats. On the one hand, their practical effect on the Soviet economy is modest and even minimal in the long run. For example, the total quantity of grain available in the country will be reduced only by some percentage points. Furthermore, this is grain for the most part not earmarked for internal consumption but rather for shipment to other countries. On the other hand, the heavy increase in the price of gold on world markets favors the Soviet Union. It allows the Soviet Union to substitute for the supply of grain considerable credit concessions to its allies, thus enabling them to acquire the same grain and other food products. Similarly, the possibility of exploiting the American measures for propagandistic purposes is enormous. Every Russian schoolboy knows by memory the paragraph of his history book that tells how

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"after the revolution the Western imperialists attempted to starve the young Soviet Republic." Now, Soviet propaganda will have a free hand in showing "the continuity of Western policies." Brezhnev has already denounced "the Americans' cynical calculation" to cause bread shortages in the Soviet Union. Soon, the lines for meat or detergent will be blamed on the imperialists or on the Washington-Peking axis, rather than on the failure of the Soviet Union's political economy.

On the whole, the bogey of an external threat will be used to consolidate the unity of the country and to reinforce militarist and chauvinist tendencies. At least for a time, it will be possible to limit severely the right of Soviet workers to leave their jobs and it will be possible to raise the price of food and everyday commodities (such unpopular measures may be enacted indirectly, e.g., by enlarging the network of so-called cooperative shops where products are sold not at state prices, but rather at much higher "commercial" prices).

To reduce liquidity, the most convenient means would be a devaluation of the ruble. Even in this case, precedents are not lacking. The devaluation of 1947, which the Soviet population remembers well, was carried out under the pretext of "striking at the speculators who enriched themselves on the shoulders of the population." Today, given the importance assumed by the black market and the consequent growth of inequities in living standards, the same pretext might have some credibility.

Thus, one could argue that the invasion of Afghanistan has been the most successful financial operation carried out by the Soviet Union in all of its history. This is not a paradox. In 1979, the Soviet Union sold to the West more or less 200 tons of gold, receiving for it a billion and a half dollars. In 1980 it is likely that they can sell much more. In fact, unlike Western banks, Soviet banks have little need of gold reserves. By fueling international tension and, with it, gold speculation, at current prices Soviet leaders may receive for their gold up to 12 billion dollars. Thus, the Soviet Union can easily secure its quota of petrodollars. Similarly, the debt of the Soviet Union or of Poland to Western banks, which just several years ago seemed colossal, begins to appear more modest.

Meanwhile, again as a result of the international crisis, the price of other raw materials, an important source of Soviet exports, is also rising, and this not only increases the income earned from the Soviet Union's foreign trade, but allows it to tie even more closely Eastern European countries to it, by furnishing them raw materials at prices below those on the international market.

It should be emphasized that all these results will be attained without any increases in production, and exclusively through political means. In the last analysis, those who will pay are the workers of Western and of oil-producing countries. As for Afghanistan it is well known that Soviet leaders have always followed the Russian saying, "Bread that has been eaten cannot be restored." Even in this case, the removal of occupation forces and the subsequent reduction in international tension appears unlikely.

Yet, the future is not rosy, even for the Soviet population. The new political line is not likely to lead to a drop in living standards, but it will produce tighter work discipline, anti-labor legislation, and a reinforcement of administrative control not only in the economy, but also in people's everyday lives (i.e., the case of Sakharov). With such a policy, the Soviet Union may certainly obtain an increase in productivity in the short run. But how long? It is difficult to say. The Soviet Union is, in many respects, an experimental society: a socio-economic formation of a new type whose laws of development are still little understood. Still, it is clear that economic and political democratization will not come about in the next few years, despite the presence in the Soviet Union of signs pointing to it.

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# CONVERSATIONS WITH WITTFOGEL*

## by Matthias Greffrath, Fritz J. Raddatz, and Michel Korzec

*Wittfogel and Greffrath*

G: You were born in 1896 in Woltersdorf near Lueneburg....

W: Yes, in the administrative district of Lueneburg.

G: You grew up in the countryside; your father was a Protestant school teacher....

W: That is correct.

G: Can it be said that your early experiences with the peasants helped lay the groundwork for what you have reintroduced into Marxist theory and which had long been forgotten, namely, the study of nature as a dimension of reality decisive for the analysis of society?

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*On November 14, 1979, at the invitation of the Düsseldorf Bildungsforum, Wittfogel made his first public appearance in Germany since he left Europe in 1934. Ostensibly marking the centennial of the births of Trotsky and Stalin, its theme was "Marxist Plurality and the Stability of Communist Systems." Extraordinary was not only Wittfogel's appearance, but also that of his co-discussants: Dutschke, Bahro, and the Social-Democratic parliamentarian, Conrad Ahlers. The moderator was Rüdiger Altmann, a student of Abendroth's.

Even more extraordinary was Wittfogel's reception. In Jürgen Rühle's commentary, "Reincarnation of the Legend of Karl August Wittfogel" (in *Deutschland Archiv*, 12 [1979] ), he reported: "The young people, who all but stormed the auditorium and then filled it, had come to hear Dutschke and Bahro; of Wittfogel and his theories they knew nothing. Nevertheless, the evening belonged to the Old Man. Rudi Dutschke, no longer the student leader but the doctor of political science...affectionately embraced the *Vaterfigur*. Bahro embarrassingly confessed that he had plagiarized Wittfogel in the core theses of *The Alternative*. Wolfgang Leonhard, an earlier defector who had refused to sit on the same platform as Bahro, extended Wittfogel his admiration and respect." As Rühle saw it: "Wittfogel brought them all — Dutschke, Bahro, Ahlers — to the heart of the matter. That is the first and most important aspect of his reappearance, the litmus paper: where do you as Leftists stand with regard to human rights, to the Helsinki charter, to 'real, existing socialism,' to Soviet Power? No one can confront these questions without focusing on Oriental despotism."

Karl August Wittfogel's "glorious return," as *Die Welt* headlined its report on the Düsseldorf Forum (November 16, 1979), is indicative of the coming-of-age of the New Left in Germany and in Europe. To be sure, it represents a changed political perspective. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* headlined a similar report, "Will the Soviet Union March Westward?" (November 16, 1979). But this changed political perspective, based in part on a realization of the nature and objectives of the Soviet Union and the Communist movement and in part on a realization of the nature and objectives of the West, is linked with a reconsideration of Marxism and its relation to radicalism. Certainly, the most poignant encounter was that between Wittfogel and the late Rudi Dutschke. Dutschke's doctoral dissertation, published in 1974 under the title: "An Attempt to Stand Lenin on his Feet: Concerning the Semi-Asiatic and West-European Roads to Socialism. Lenin, Lukacs and the Third International" (Berlin, 1974), although ambivalent towards Wittfogel, is clearly informed by *Oriental Despotism*. The distance Dutschke had traveled between 1969 and 1979 indicates the changed climate. After the Düsseldorf Forum Wittfogel was invited to go to Frankfurt to meet the new directors of the Institute for Social Research, who expressed their intention of returning to the Institute's original concerns of social science and the labor movement, and to plan for the publication of his collected works.

It is within this context that these three conversations with Wittfogel must be understood. All took place in his New York apartment. Their content reflects the diverse interests of Greffrath, Raddatz and Korzec. The difference in length of the interviews is a result of the fact that Greffrath had five sessions, the others only two.

Matthias Greffrath is an instructor at the Free University of Berlin and a radio journalist, who was involved with the New Left in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Berlin. He first approached Wittfogel in the spring of 1977 as a representative of *Westdeutscher Rundfunk* (WDR) and *Sender Freies Berlin* (SFB) in connection with a planned series on the life and work of German-

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W: There are two objective considerations: From the very beginning I was interested in cultural geography. That I got from Marx. In my first Marxist struggles in Berlin, about 1922, I sought to incorporate the natural factor into Marxism. Secondly, I devoted myself to the study of a great agrarian Asiatic society, China, from the standpoints of social science and geo-history. These are the differences between me and all others.

G: Are these challenges also explainable in terms of your rural background?

W: You mean...?

G: I mean that these concerns almost hit you in the face.

W: One might say that I got it from my father, who loved history and geography. Maps have always excited me tremendously. I saw in them a deep reality. I don't know why. In the early years of my life I lived in the country. There I actually saw, to quote Engels, *wie mans macht* [how it's done].... There are some people who see nothing. Sombart somewhere describes a group of Russian students. 'They came from the most remote regions of Russia. They saw nothing; they saw only books. They had books and they read in books and they didn't know where they were.' I always wanted to know where I was and why everything was the way it was.... To be sure, a development took place in me in the move from the country to a very small town, Bergen an der Dumme, then to Lueneburg, a city of 27,000 with its own municipal theater and a higher cultural life, then to the big cities: Leipzig, Munich, Berlin. There is a certain logic in that which some of my friends didn't have. Johannes Becher, who was a good friend of mine for years, was strictly a city person, a Munich man; and Lukacs, with whom on a certain scientific level I had a warm friendship, was also a typical big-city person, living in the biggest cities in Hungary, Austria and Germany. The difference is there and the fact that ... Lukacs believed and once told me, that nature is a social concept, whereas I replied that the primacy of natural conditions is an ontological fact. One will never ride nature like one can ride a horse. That was our first great difference, which at least in my case, is no doubt attributable to early experiences.

G: Then you went to school in Lueneburg and the *Wandervogel* [German Youth Movement] played a great role on your way to the socialist movement.

W: When we moved from Bergen to Lueneburg I went to the Johanneum Gymnasium. The first three years at the Realgymnasium, then to the Humanistisches Gymnasium, in what I could call the good old classical manner. As you have

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speaking emigre social scientists, most of whom had left Germany for the United States in the 1930s. His interview with Wittfogel was broadcast on October 23, 1977, under the title: "Gegen bestimmte Sachen muss man kämpfen [Against Certain Things One Must Fight]." It was published along with interviews of Günther Anders, Hans Gerth, Marie Jahoda, Leo Loewenthal, Adolph Lowe, Toni Oelsner and Alfred Sohn-Rethel, under the title, "Die hydraulische Gesellschaft und das Gespenst der asiatischen Restauration" [Hydraulic Society and the Specter of Asiatic Restoration] in *Die Zerstörung einer Zukunft: Gespräche mit emigrierten Sozialwissenschaftlern*, edited by Matthias Greffrath (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1979).

Fritz J. Raddatz, an East German defector, is a professor at the Hannover Technical University and the chief feuilleton editor of the German weekly, *Die Zeit*. His interview was published in the March 9, 1979, issue of *Die Zeit* under the title: "Vom Versagen der Linken" [On the Failure of the Left].

Michel Korzec was involved in the Student Movement in the Netherlands and is now associate professor in sociology at Delft Technical University near Amsterdam. His interview was published in the May 25, 1979, issue of the Dutch weekly, *Intermediair*, under the title: "Karl Wittfogel en de 'Aziatische produktiewijze' " [Karl Wittfogel and the 'Asiatic Mode of Production'].

The Greffrath interview was translated by David J. Parent; the Raddatz interview by Leslie A. Adelson; the Korzec interview by Maryska Suda. — *G.L. Ulmen*

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mentioned, my interest in nature in various forms was, of course, always present. In the middle of my development as a Gymnasium student I became acquainted with the *Wandervogel,* which soon influenced me greatly. In my fourth year in Barsinghausen near Hannover, I had two experiences that complemented one another. First, I met there two Youth Movement boys who were older than I, who played the guitar and sang and made a great impression on me. It then took a year or two before I joined the movement. Second, in a drawer of an old table in the house of my friend who had taken me along to Barsinghausen, I found a book without a dust cover, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle.* That was the first socialist book I ever read. These were two crucial experiences, which gradually prepared me for socialism.

G: It has often been said since 1945 that the *Wandervogel* was one of the sources the National Socialist movement fed on.

W: As you know, that is not true. Not only did Hitler in *Mein Kampf* sharply attack the young people with long hair and guitars, but he repressed almost all these movements if they had any political potential. The *Wandervogel,* as I came to know it, was the exact opposite of the National Socialist movement. Not only were we not educated for such a militaristic and politically disciplined movement, but we grew out of a rejection of it. In those days there were young people who stood on the periphery of the German military tradition. But we were, I won't say consciously anti-militaristic — that is too technical a word — but psychologically that is exactly what we were. We wanted a free way of life. We wanted to dress as we chose. We wanted to make plans according to our own desires, and we had self-management, i.e., we had control of our own little affairs. The *Wandervogel,* which I first came to know in Lueneburg as the *Altwandervogel,* was one of the last, not insignificant forms of a romantic feeling of freedom. The word liberalism is really too narrow; but in case of doubt it is better than other words, and it was in this sense that I took it up. And later, when I came to Berlin at the end of the war, Walt Whitman was the poet I wanted to introduce into our youth groups. That is not entirely meaningless. Whitman was certainly no forerunner of National Socialism.

G: So it was a kind of protest movement, like the ones in the 1960s, trying to break with the disintegrating, slowly corrupting Wilhelminian society by returning to nature.

W: The term protest movement is too political. We were simply what we were. You know that Schiller makes the distinction between two attitudes, one in which a person acts consciously, the other instinctively. Ours was the latter.

G: You made your *Abitur* in 1914, the year the war broke out.

W: That affected my whole development. Beginning with the second semester of my fifth year in Gymnasium, I became acquainted with a whole new line of thinking that was contrary to my tradition. It was prompted by the socialist Lily Braun's autobiography. But above all, there were the Scandinavians, Ibsen, Bjornsen and later Strindberg, there were the Russians, and there was Nietzsche. Now the whole structure of my thinking began to crumble. By my last two years of Gymnasium I was beginning to reject the "establishment." So I was ready to go my own way. Although I was the only one in my class who did not volunteer for the army, all the others came to me and said: "You understand why we are all volunteering, but we also understand why you are not, for we know that you really reject this whole thing." Looking back, this touches me deeply. I don't understand why my schoolmates did not condemn me as outsiders did.

During the first years of the war I was decidedly an outsider. I remember once being almost thrashed by the peaceful vegetarians in one of their restaurants because I

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opposed the invasion of Belgium and the bombardment of the Cathedral of Rheims. I came away unscathed, but the experience shows that at that time my position was not very popular. After continued relations with the *Wandervogel* in Lueneburg and Rostock, I was finally inducted in Rostock. In Berlin, however, these relations continued. There was a small organization of the *Wandervogel*, called the *Deutscher Wandervogel*. At first I didn't notice that quite a few of its members were Jewish. When I said to the leader, Hermann Bergmann, "I want to join you," he replied, "Karl August, you know that we have many Jews." I answered, "What difference does that make? I know your style is the one most congenial to me." I spent some of my happiest hours in this group, which, incidentally, overlapped with other German *Wandervogel* groups in Berlin and led to my meeting people like Hans Blueher. It was a far-reaching network.

But in the winter of 1917-1918 several things happened. First, there was my association first as a pupil and then as a friend with Max Wertheimer, the leading figure of *Gestalt* psychology. Wertheimer introduced me to Kaethe Kollwitz. Then there were the new political tendencies within the Youth Movement. Furthermore, the New Year's circular of 1918, which led to a split of those with pro-war sentiments within the *Wandervogel* who approved existing policies, and those of us who wanted a different outcome. When the war ended — the day after the abolition of the German Reich — a six-member socialist student council, which included myself, was established. Now I also joined the Independent Social-Democratic Party.

G: The winter of 1917-1918 was also the time of the Russian Revolution. How did you and your friends in the *Wandervogel* greet this revolution? As the great thunderbolt that the French Revolution was for Hegel, or were you skeptical at the beginning?

W: For me it began early in 1917. I was in Lueneburg on vacation. I still remember how the first announcements of the so-called February revolution came. Of course, we were excited. At first it was only a hope that the war would now come to an end and a renewal would follow. Then, in the fall of 1917, came the October Revolution. By then I was a soldier in Berlin. Our sympathies were with the anti-war position. We held harmless secret meetings, but if the military regime had caught wind of them, they would have had us arrested. That was on Senta Street. We were moved most strongly by anti-war sentiments. The Russian Revolution initiated a time of soul-searching. When I was in Leipzig my sympathies were with the Independents, and it remained that way in Berlin when I was sent there as a soldier. In Leipzig, I read the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, in which Rosa Luxemburg and others had written. In Berlin, I subscribed to *Vorwärts*, which under Kautsky was against the war. Naturally, in 1918 I joined the Independent Social-Democratic Party, which had a multifaceted position. It sympathized with the Russian Revolution, but demanded that we must make our own revolution in a different way. Consequently, the arguments between us and the Communists — the Spartacists — were very sharp.

I remember that I was described as a mixture of Karl Marx and Lao-tse. My Marxism was then developing, but it was still very immature. I was not at all clear on the finer nuances of theory and practice. I read Lenin's *State and Revolution* in the winter of 1918, one month before the outbreak of the German revolution. In Lueneburg I gave two lectures, which gave birth to the local branch of the Independent Social-Democratic Party. The second lecture was much sharper than the first, due to my reading of Lenin's brochure. In 1920 I became a teacher at the *Volkshochschule* in Schloss Tinz. At that time people such as Gustav Wyneken, also an Independent, came to us. He heard one of my lectures on art history and was horrified that I gave an

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economic explanation for the development of Gothic architecture in Germany. He said, "That is appalling! It just can't be explained that way." I answered, "Yes, that is how it must be conceived. Material production is not everything, but it cannot be excluded. Then a man came to Tinz in an old uniform (which former soldiers continued to wear for years if they didn't have money to buy civilian clothes). He was Karl Korsch. That was the beginning in Tinz of my friendly relation with Korsch, which was very intense while we were in the Independent Social-Democratic and the German Communist parties.

While I was in Tinz in 1920, the differences within the Independent Socialist Party grew. Korsch and I attended the Halle Congress, where Zinoviev spoke and the Independent Party split. In the following months we worked at consolidating a new and broader Communist movement in Jena, and in the vicinity of Gera.

G: Arthur Rosenberg claims that three opportunities were missed to turn the bourgeois into a socialist republic: in 1918, he blames the Social Democrats; in 1920, after the Kapp putsch, he blames the Independents; and in 1923, he blames the Communists, who missed an opportunity that — and here he agrees with Lenin — would have been very important also for a liberal development in the Soviet Union. Do you agree with this evaluation of Weimar's early years?

W: I think that Rosenberg understood the problem when he said that in the beginning the Social Democrats failed. Certainly, in 1918 the predominant attitude of the Social Democratic majority was not in favor of a socialist revolution. The members of the Independent Party were not ready to fight for their convictions. The Spartacists were isolated and this led to the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, not only because the Social Democrats were uncertain and allowed the Free Corps to do as they wished, but also because the Independents were not ready to identify with them and to take an active part. The first point is more complicated than Rosenberg suggests.

During the Kapp putsch of 1920, the Independents played a leading role. Of course, I'm well informed on that subject. I was in Tinz at the time and we were actively involved. Our men who had weapons took part in repressing the local troops [the Free Corps units] who were for the Kapp putsch. We surrounded the main building of the Gera City Hall. I stood there with a revolver, which I probably couldn't have used even if I had had to. The countermovement had not yet become as strong as it did later with the *Stahlhelm* [German veterans' organization]. But our students went back to Tinz. And what Rosenberg says is right; at that time this very important intermediary group, which subsequently split in the fall, had no intention of entering into a revolutionary struggle for a socialist Germany.

The second *Hohe Meissner* of the Youth Movement took place in the summer of 1923, and our Communist and pro-Communist group made the biggest impression, in contrast with the old-fashioned and politically insipid leaders. We aroused great sympathy through our speeches, which were printed in full in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* by [Alfons] Pacquet and others. We then visited many parts of Germany to see how far German youth would go along with a revolutionary uprising. But the uprising did not come. The Communists "failed." Brandler was in Chemnitz with the factory councils; and the Communist and, for the most part, also the Independent factory councils, said: "We can't do it." The whole labor movement was not ready for a revolution, and thus it was *not* a failure of the Communist leaders. The Communists yielded to the dominant tendency, and then the party was outlawed. The first time I came to Lueneburg after the crisis, the head of the administrative district, a very decent man, said to me, "I had a list of those to be arrested first — your name was at the top!" I met him again as a fellow prisoner in the Lichtenburg concentration camp, where we

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greeted one another with respectful opposition.

G: Your work in the Weimar years is in your articles and in the book *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas*. They suggest points of departure which were then new in "official Marxism"; they present ideas which have been known to be part of Marx's canon only since publication of the *Grundrisse*.

W: Since the *Grundrisse* and since the *Introduction* that Marx had previously written in the late summer of 1857.... There is much in the Introduction that is very important for my development. For example, the primacy of nature. From 1853, Marx knew that in the oriental world the aridity of the environment and the need to control water led, through large public-works projects under state control, to the peculiarity of oriental agriculture, government and society — and to the particular historical position of Asiatic society. This became clear to me earlier than to other Marxist social scientists. I was then still a young man, a neophyte among such Marxists as Korsch and Lukacs. I had already written about it when in 1923 I went to the first Marxist Study Week. Later, I found many things in Marx's Introduction and the *Grundrisse* — not only the stress on nature, but also another tremendously important remark about "derivative" conditions, i.e., that some relations of production can be transferred to areas that do not have the same mode of production, a view Marx held since 1853. He applied the term "semi-Asiatic" to Russia, which is tremendously important and which almost no one understood, including Lukacs. Plekhanov understood it, but even Lenin did not see clearly the distinction Marx saw between completely Asiatic societies like China, India, the Near East, etc., and Russia. Then came the Tatars and Tatarization. It raised the now colossal question: How did this Russia come about? Here is the inner logic in my theoretical development. It consists in starting with the great classical heritage and the most profound ideas, which Marx himself sought and represented contradictorily and which I expanded and developed systematically. Marx's breakthrough in 1853 led to the *Grundrisse* (1857-58), which he then laid aside in order to write the famous *Preface* of 1859 with all its contradictions. For me, this development was logical.

After the war, Korsch, calling my attention to a decisive text, said, "There is an early version of *Capital,* the *Grundrisse*. There are probably only four or five copies in America. You must see that book." Korsch understood the book just like he understood Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* — only half of it. I incorporated the whole historical framework into my analysis, which was then published in *Oriental Despotism* along with an account of "Asiatic" Russia that today is more important than it was in 1947-48, when I first discovered it in Marx and Lenin. There are early drafts of my book, with Korsch's marginal notes which show that he was enthusiastic even then about the nature argument, though he unfortunately wasn't able to do much with it.

G: I would like to dwell a bit more on Weimar....

W: At the end of the Weimar period, I wrote a comprehensive book, almost 800 pages, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas*. While in the concentration camp, I heard that Haushofer, who had a great influence on Rudolph Hess at the time, had asked: "Hess, do you know that Wittfogel has written the most important book in Germany on Chinese economy? Why don't you release him?" Hess allegedly answered: "That may be so, but of all German intellectuals he has also written the worst things about the Führer. He stays put!"

G: The title *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas* does not seem to relate to Marx, but to Max Weber. Did he play a role comparable to Marx in the working out of your theoretical position?

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W: Positively. Not only did he play a role, but he also provided the inspiration for my "hydraulic" ideas and I later alluded to this in choosing the title. In our apartment in Lueneburg — on a corner where after the war only a crater was left — I first read Weber's book on China and then several of his other writings which gave world history a reality I had never known before. I suddenly realized what Marx meant by the Asiatic mode of production, and that Weber, despite his respect for Marx, did not elaborate on the waterworks argument. Instead of pursuing the nature problem, he went on to other things. So it happened that I was contradictorily inspired by Weber, and then tried to understand Marx's entire writings from 1853 on. This is the reason why I name Weber more than anyone else. I stress that he is much more significant and goes much further in posing the question. It is a real pity that there is something like a *lumpen* Weberism, even in Germany. A giant has been subjected to a pathetic treatment. I won't say castrated, but reduced to a level where the great vision he had in his second phase (1904-1905) is not understood.

My relation to the Frankfurt Institute, which was developing in those years, was not characterized by a creative intellectual exchange on these questions. The group that assumed the leading "critical" position developed away from the Institute's original social science position to psychology and philosophy. It did not even do justice to Weber's false (or limited) framing of the question in the form in which it is very productive.

Later, I wrote as a Communist who wanted to be a good orthodox Marxist. As such, I wrote these articles on nature that didn't fit at all with Communist development, for I came to conclusions that were not welcome in Moscow. No wonder that the three parts of my first nature article were published in the German edition of *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus* without critical reservations, but in the Russian version with the comment that the editorial board does not agree with everything Comrade Wittfogel says. I consoled myself with the idea that Marx would have agreed with me, while I met the disapproval of the very people who were systematically working for the Stalinist destruction of the basic principles of Marxism, which Stalin himself then undertook in 1938 in his *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik), Short Course*. When I wrote the second nature article, its three parts were published in neither the German nor the Russian *Banner*; but in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*.

G: Was the politically explosive point of these articles that a ruling class can form without having private ownership of the means of production?

W: And without class struggle! That is the first point. The second point is the meaning of this position about which I was quite naive at first. I still had no understanding of Russia. A passage in my early book, *Geschichte der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, quotes Trotsky's remark that Russian cities are "Asiatic" cities. But at that time I still didn't know Marxism well enough to see where that leads. And when I did, I saw also where Trotsky failed. It would have been better for his development, and perhaps for the development of democratic possibilities in Russia, if he had studied this more closely. Deutscher says that Trotsky did not want to bother with textual details. But there are certain details that one must bother with. When Marx wanted to criticize someone, he wanted to know precisely what the man said. This is important! There is also a philological materialism that one must not neglect. That is just what the "critical" group in the Institute for Social Research neglected. In this sense, if one really wants to take the problem seriously, it is necessary to identify the various material and organizational conditions.

I did that. Like my second nature article, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas*

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was to appear also in Russian translation. But there were difficulties. The director of the Agrarian Institute, Dubrovskii, a personal friend of mine, wanted to publish the book. "But that stuff about the 'Asiatic' mode of production is not going over too well here," he said. So we approached a number of comrades, including Radek, asking them to write a Foreword according to the usual whitewashing procedure — criticizing the author yet in the end declaring the book to be important. Radek agreed to do it, but then he stopped. He reportedly said that he didn't want to write a foreword against me. Varga and others did the same. So *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas* never appeared in Russian.

G: Can you say something more about your differences with the Institute for Social Research? Were there also political differences? What was the nature of the theoretical controversy?

W: There were methodological and ontological differences. I had no differences with Gruenberg, the Institute's first director, i.e., since 1924. After Gruenberg fell ill in 1928, there was an interregnum during which Pollock was in charge. When Horkheimer took over in 1931, social science was subjectivized. I couldn't go along with that. I stayed, but as an outsider. That Lukacs and I did our work on aesthetics outside of the Institute is very telling. I was tolerated, but there were fundamental differences that increased even more in America when Marcuse and Adorno became leading members. After a friendly period, our relations cooled and finally lapsed. In 1957 I sent several copies of *Oriental Despotism* to Frankfurt, where Horkheimer, Adorno and Pollock had re-established the Institute. I learned through a mutual friend that they didn't even read my book. If they had opened it, it would have been meaningless to them anyway. In the end, the aging Adorno and Horkheimer, affected by the crisis, came back to me. In letters, to be published eventually, they wrote: "Yes, Wittfogel was one of the pillars of the Institute." *Habeat sibi.*

G: So you never shared the Frankfurt Institute's Young Hegelianism?

W: No. I judge Young Hegelianism as Marx did: as a Fichteanism gone wild. I drew ever nearer to what Marx called empirical Hegelianism. I learned a lot from Hegel, but not of a metaphysical nature. Marcuse and his friends absorbed primarily the conceptual Hegel of the *Phenomenology* and of the *Logic*, but not the Hegelian attitude toward nature, history and art, which I find to be decisive.

G: That means that the Frankfurt School moved only in totality, without...

W: ...without understanding the problems that Marx saw so deeply. Marx at least struggled contradictorily with totality, but they didn't see it. They neglected the great esoteric ideas in Marx, which excited Korsch and Lukacs, in my view partly for reasons which Marx finds shabby. When like Stalin, Marcuse writes of the three main forms of society, he is not innocent, as we were at first. He knew better. The Marx of Oriental society had been described to him at the Institute through my oral and printed formulations.

G: That means you didn't ever share the theory of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, of the spell that could no longer be escaped?

W: Not in this form. I now see that one misunderstands Marx's theory of alienation if one fails to see two dangers he describes; the fact of the Asiatic alienation, and the possibility of a pseudo-communist bestialization of man. A treatment of Communism and alienation must deal with these two questions, and the adherents of Critical Theory have not done this adequately. Failure in these points — especially Adorno's and Marcuse's — has led to problems. This tendency has nothing to do with the tolerance which the Institute practiced toward members with divergent views. This standpoint, to which I owe a lot not only under Gruenberg but also under

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Horkheimer, was not the later Marcuse's "tolerance." Many emigrants, here and in Europe, benefited from Horkheimer's tolerance, and that must never be forgotten.

G: Does your critique of the Frankfurt theory of reification mean that Marx's thinking on the subject was forgotten: "If one takes away from things their domination over man — which is indeed the great problem of capitalism and advanced capitalism — then one must watch out not to give it back to man"?

W: Yes, but not only that. It also has to do with the idea that man never achieves total freedom, that he never becomes completely free. In a famous passage in the third volume of *Capital* concerning the realm of freedom, Marx stresses that man's freedom is based on dependence on nature and rational behavior toward it — and toward his fellow man. This dependence remains. If you believe that because the world is modernized you can ride nature like a horse, you are wrong. With progress, this bond becomes only deeper and more complex, but it does not disappear.

G: Your emigration is connected with the fact that you were a Marxist in the Communist movement. In the last years of Weimar you became critical of the German Communist Party's official policies based on the collapse of capitalism and social fascism. What opposition to this party line was possible within the party in those years? To what extent could one seek to organize something like a united front against the oncoming Nazi danger?

W: One could not, of course, be in open opposition. That was possible only if one was very strong and had high positions like Remmele, Neumann and Muenzenberg, and even then only with all possible obeisances. In my way, I tried to recognize what Hitler meant for Germany, Europe, and the world. I tried to say everything I wanted to say in a form that made it possible for me to remain in the Party, i.e., with the prescribed obeisances toward basic positions. When the Young Communists came to me and said, "Comrade Wittfogel, the Party does not instruct us on the Jews and anti-Semitism. We read your articles, we see that you are studying this matter thoroughly. Your material is the best, teach us," I tried to teach them. Then they said, "Very good, that helps us a lot. Why doesn't the Party print that?" I then went to the Party leadership, i.e., to the general secretary, Leo Flieg, and showed him my manuscript. Flieg himself was a Jew. He understood me better than most others. Later he was killed by Stalin. Flieg said, "Go ahead and leave it here. Tomorrow we're having a meeting of the Politburo. I'll report to them on the matter and see what can be done with it." When I came back three days later, he said, "Comrade Wittfogel, I have good news. They've looked at it and accepted the proposal. They want to publish your manuscript as a special brochure on anti-Semitism. *But*, the main enemy of course is Social Democracy, and therefore we are starting a new series of publications. The first brochure will be against the Social Democrats and yours will be the second." The first brochure was never written, and the second never appeared. When, after the burning of the Reichstag, the Nazis occupied the Karl Liebknecht House, the Party headquarters, my brochure still lay there unprinted. This shows the difficulties people like myself had to work under — difficulties that many of my comrades well understood. The higher up in the hierarchy, the blinder one had to be. The Berlin correspondent of *Pravda*, who was personally on good terms with me, reproached me that I was "too obsessed with Hitler." According to him, the main enemy was not Hitler, but Luxemburg. At that time the Trotskyists were using Luxemburg's arguments to attack Stalin's policy toward Germany. That was when my book on China appeared. The situation was such that I could have gone away to China. But I stayed in Germany, and within my limits I continued my struggle against the Nazis. Here I must once again point out that at that time the Frankfurt Institute

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gave me full support. Precisely because under Horkheimer the Institute followed a theoretical line that I did not share, I must give them all the more credit for enabling me to continue my work on China, on Marxism and on the Nazis with a small but regular income. One day after my 80th birthday, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* said that I was the only member of the Frankfurt Institute who actively fought against Hitler. That is probably right. Among the students there was, of course, Joseph Duenner, who fought magnificently and once physically drove the Hitler students out of the university. Duenner was one of *our* students! But in the middle or older age group, I was probably the only Institute member to fight openly against the Nazis. The others were not active; they discovered fascism as an object of critical rejection only later, in America. But they gave me free rein. And when occasionally I came from Berlin to Frankfurt, I saw that most of my colleagues had read almost everything I had written on the subject.

Among the German intellectuals, my role was an unhappy one. Officially "we" fought the Social Democrats in the *Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller*, of which I was on the national board. That is, although I clearly saw the danger of fascism, "we" in the writers' organization opposed the Social Democrats — the moderate wing, whose members were anything but social fascists — with the reproach that in their own way they were preparing the ground for fascism. I was really confused in this regard, and today I regret it very deeply. But my own position remained markedly anti-Nazi, and when it was a question of working together with intellectuals and expressing enmity toward fascism outside the writers' organization, I came forward as a leading spokesman of anti-fascism. The American reporter, Knickerbocker, wrote about that. In a public discussion between me and the leader of the Hitler Youth, I wiped the floor with the Nazis, as the saying goes. The fascist defended himself against my attack: "That is not in our program...." Then I pulled out the document and said, "Here is the program. Just read it aloud." The audience burst into laughter. In other situations the physical danger was greater, but I don't want to go into that.... In my anti-fascist activity, I went as far as I could without breaking with the Communist movement, since I believed that the Russians were the only great socialist force in the world.

G: So you had no reason to draw closer to Social Democracy?

W: No. But I was very glad that my friend Joseph Duenner, when he saw that the Communist Party did not really support him in his struggle against the Nazis in the university, left it and began to work with the *Reichsbanner*, because in Frankfurt he received active support only from that organization. I had many Social Democratic friends. I spent the last night before I left Germany and after my release from the concentration camp with the Social Democratic intellectual Adolf Reichwein, whose standpoint was very close to mine, and who, as you probably know, took part in the conspiracy against Hitler and was brutally killed.

G: The enmity between the KPD and the SPD was based on the former's policy against social fascism — whose theoretical origins were in Varga's theory of the collapse of capitalism. It argued that Social Democracy was the main support of capitalism and, therefore, the main enemy. Was this shared by Communist and Social Democratic workers, or were they displeased by this struggle among brothers?

W: Point one: the workers wanted unity. Point two: Varga's theory of collapse was not the official line. The line was that there was a crisis in German capitalism and that this crisis was expressed by the growth of Hitler's movement. But ultimately, the decisive thing was the preparation for a European war, and a few things have to be said about that. The originator of this grand strategy was not Stalin, but Lenin. Solzhenitsyn is right on that point. When Lenin saw that the Russian Revolution was not

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developing as he wanted, he tried to find new solutions by mobilizing nationalist forces: in the East, i.e., in the "colonies", but most especially in the West — in Germany. Along with Trotsky, Lenin worked out the Rapallo line: to bring about collaboration with German military leaders and promote their struggle against "Versailles," i.e., against the West. Brecht quotes from me in his *Arbeitsjournal*, long before he showed up in New York in 1943. And I have repeated it again and again: as Radek put it to me, the German workers have to accept Hitler for two years. He meant to give Hitler time to prepare for war against the West. Radek did not say the second thing openly, but that was the political objective. Stalin did not invent it; he adopted Lenin's idea that one must use the great contradictions to drive the world revolution forward as the main guarantee against an "Asiatic restoration" in Russia. In September 1924, Stalin wrote that of all these contradictions the most important one to exploit was the German: the German national problem plants "a mine under Europe." It is important to get away from silly explanations in order to see what Lenin and Trotsky and Stalin were thinking. Although approving of Lenin's strategy, Trotsky would not have allied himself with Hitler. He saw too clearly the horror of anti-Semitism. Trotsky's defeat was therefore the defeat of an important nuance in Soviet foreign policy. The basic strategic position came from Lenin. It was bastardized by Stalin. According to Bukharin, collaboration with Hitler promoted a bestial policy.

G: Does that mean that you never understood the pact as Brecht did, as a tactical measure to gain time for mobilization against Hitler?

W: No, because I knew that Stalin wanted to detonate the mine under Europe. Brecht's explanation does not take into account foreign policy alternatives. Of course, Stalin made a great tactical about-face, not only defensively, but also to get the struggle started in the West. What Radek and others have said about this makes clear what Stalin wanted in 1932; and the [Hitler-Stalin] pact was the culmination of all this. I find it a bit shabby that Brecht tried to defend something that should not have been defended.

G: One more question about "social fascism." Didn't the Social Democratic policy of law and order that sought to get a foothold among the workers — I'm thinking for example of May 1, 1929 — lead to this thesis despite its theoretical absurdity?

W: Yes and no. The workers wanted an alliance of the SPD and the KPD. A number of people had been shot to death on that famous street by the Social Democratic police. But the stance of a second-rank leader was nothing compared to the main strategic problem. The workers wanted unity against Hitler. When the Nazis shot a number of workers in the suburbs, the KPD called meetings throughout Berlin to pacify this tremendous urge of the workers for unity. The organizational director for greater Berlin, Albert Kuntze, who was my friend and my former student in the Party school, spoke in Wedding [a northern district of Berlin, known in the years before Hitler as "Red Wedding" because communist influence there was very strong]. When he said: "Comrades, the fascist bandits have killed our proletarian brothers," there was a tremendous outcry of rage: "Revenge, revenge!" Then he turned his argument around and said, 'But comrades, we must not forget because of the blood that has flowed here that the main culprits are the Social Democrats like...Noske, Scheidemann, Ebert." You should have seen how the workers physically shrank. They had come to fight the Nazis, and they now were being told to turn against the Social Democrats. And that just didn't make sense to them. They accepted it because they thought the Party knew best, but they didn't like it.

I then went to Italy to unearth the politically very demagogic and therefore very

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explosive original program of Italian fascism. On the way, I stopped in Switzerland and spoke before the Communist Red Front Fighters. They said, "Comrade Wittfogel, why on earth don't we get together with the Social Democrats. We need a United Front." I couldn't answer that. I was in a horrible situation because I did not want to break with the Party. As Lukacs said to me in 1933, "I'd rather eat dung than let myself be torn away from the Movement." I still remember a meeting in Wedding in early 1933. One of the Social Democratic *Reichstag* delegates was speaking against an alliance with the Communists. I answered: "Don't you see, we have to get together, otherwise we'll all be killed...."

No, there is no question about it, the masses knew all about Noske, etc., but would say: "I don't really want to know that in such detail...." They wanted to know something altogether different. They felt the threat to their organizational existence. And they were right! The friendly gestures and help I received as a prisoner of the Nazis and in the concentration camps came from all possible strata, including the Social Democrats. They were *not* all of the opinion that we had to fight one another.

G: That means that in these last years before Hitler it was a desperate struggle by you and all those close to you, a multiple front struggle, so to speak. Coalitions and associations came into being which included groups that stood even to the right of the Social Democrats. I'm thinking now of the *Arbeitskreis für Planwirtschaft*, to which both you and Lukacs belonged.

W: [Ernst] Jünger was there, along with [Friedrich] Hielscher, i.e., anti-fascist nationalists.

G: How did this *Arbeitskreis* originate? How did it achieve this cooperation, and what did people hope to gain by it?

W: People hoped and succeeded in achieving the development of friendly relations with pro-Soviet, non-Marxist intellectuals. I don't believe I told you the end of my Jünger story. In February, before the burning of the *Reichstag*, he advised me to begin my China trip immediately. Jünger was one of the few nationalists I saw when I got out of the concentration camp. It was arranged in a very complicated, conspiratorial manner. I saw him in a house in the woods near Potsdam. He asked me whether I had been in three camps and how it was there. I didn't know whether I could trust this man, so I didn't speak openly. I said, "It wasn't very pleasant, you can believe me..." He said that what he knew of the SS through the army made him believe that what was going on in the concentration camps would defile the name of Germany for a hundred years. As *Auf den Marmorklippen* [On the Marble Cliffs] shows, he did not give up his inner opposition.

G: Does that mean that there was a serious, conservative anti-fascism?

W: Yes. Two groups were especially active in helping persecuted Jews in Germany. Of course, the workers and their friends, but also conservatives and sections of the nobility. They too wanted a Germany different from Weimar, but not the Germany that Hitler created.

G: What was the basis for the fascination of the masses with National Socialist propaganda? Ernst Bloch argued that the Nazis exploited all the socialist ideas, symbols and feelings that the Communists neglected.

W: That was one tendency, but not the dominant one. It was the tendency of the second revolution that Goebbels originally staged. There were possibly elements of a proletarian socialism, but this tendency came to nothing. It was probably there in the beginning, but it had no influence in the propaganda I have seen. In Hitler's speeches, in *Mein Kampf* and the *Völkischer Beobachter* it was much less significant than with Mussolini. It must not be forgotten that Mussolini originally was a semi-anarchist

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radical socialist. Therefore, he knew Marxism better than the leading Nazis.

Two experiences lend substance to your question. Willi Muenzenberg once said to me: "A short time ago a group of Hitler Youth boys came to me and said, 'Heil, Willi!' We were in the Communist Youth organization, and our ideas haven't changed, but we joined the Nazis because they want the same thing and will do it faster." A second experience of this kind happened to me in the concentration camp of Lichtenburg. I was half dead after working in the moor near Esterwegen and I and three prisoners were lying on straw sacks in the so-called hospital. We found out that the medics were former worker-medics who had gone over to the Nazis for a variety of reasons. A few took it seriously and said: "We'll accomplish what you failed to do." But others were in despair. One — naturally, we had to be very cautious in case he was an *agent provacateur* — came in to us after terrible brutalities against the prisoners, perhaps also after shooting supposedly escaping prisoners, and shouted: "I can't stand it anymore! I can't stand it anymore! I'll pull out my revolver and fire away at the SS!" We said: "There are enough victims. Don't commit suicide. They'll tear you to pieces. Stay what you are and help the victims as well as you can." He helped us as much as he could. What became of him later I don't know. Contradictions existed in both camps....

G: When were you arrested, right after January 1933, or only later?

W: After January 30, the Nazis were quiet for one month, *Red Flag* still appeared and one of my anti-Hitler articles still came out. The change to open terrorist attacks followed the burning of the *Reichstag* and that was apparently also planned. Like many others, I had already gone into hiding. I was in Moabit, and a Social Democrat who lived in the apartment next to mine reported to me by telephone that stormtroopers had driven back and forth the whole night waiting for me to return. That is when I tried to make my way to the border. Insanely, I still voted in the *Reichstag* election, when the Nazis supposedly won 43 percent of the votes. I reached the border, was arrested there, first held in a local jail, in a small camp, and then in about a dozen jails. From Lake Constance they brought me to Frankfurt, where the new rulers wanted to arrange a trial against the Institute for Social Research. While there, I found out that they had no evidence. After that, I was taken to a large camp on the moors, Esterwegen in the Papenburg complex, and finally to the camp at Lichtenburg.

G: In England you immediately wrote a novel about your experiences in the concentration camp. What was the additional information on the National Socialist dictatorship which you learned there and what form did the relations between former political opponents — Communists, Socialists, Social Democrats and others — take in the camps?

W: I don't know whether you remember that, at the end of the acknowledgements in the first edition of *Oriental Despotism,* I wrote about the friends I had in the camp: about those who only wanted to turn the terrorist methods of the concentration camps around so that they would be masters where now they were slaves, and about others who wanted to overcome the entire institution as such. That is what I learned there.

Of course, there were still some loose ends, and I will discuss them in a new edition of the book. First, I did not yet see how deep bureaucratization and totalization had gone in Russia. Although the intellectual hero of my concentration camp novel said nothing about the KPD's and the Comintern's struggle against the Nazis — there was none — he had the same illusions about the Soviet Union as I did. Second, I was not fair to the Social Democrats. Though I didn't call them social fascists, in the novel there is a narrow-minded Social Democrat called Freitag. He was a real person I met

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in the moor camp. Although I didn't treat him maliciously, he reflected the rest of the prejudices. I must say I described the Nazis accurately. I argued that they were capable of anything and one should not have any illusions about that. When I argued in England that our — i.e., the Communist, Moscow's and Stalin's — policy toward Hitler had been unfortunate and wrong, one of my friends ran to the Central Committee of the English Party and I was given a warning. When I visited Paris in 1934 I was told that I should not say that the Party has suffered a defeat or that they would throw me out! It was only a matter of an orderly retreat! When I came back from China to America, I argued similarly. The director of the control commission came to me and said, just half a year before the pact: "It has come to our attention that you are speaking maliciously about Stalin. You must stop." I had not yet decided to break with the Party so I argued that Lenin followed policies that I generally approved of and understood. He always explained what he did. When Stalin acted, we often did not know what he was doing. I was for a leadership that made clear what it wanted and explained why. Then this man answered that he was not proud of Stalin either, but that Stalin was all we had. These episodes confirmed my conviction that no compromise must be made with the Nazis. This anticipated my later position on Auschwitz and the Gulag.

G: You arrived in New York in the fall of 1934...

W: I came here with the uncompleted manuscript of the novel, which Wieland Herzfelde had accepted. It was labeled Malik Press, based in London, but really appeared in Prague. After the final editing of the novel, my wife and I undertook a social analysis of the NSDAP, which concluded that the workers played no role in the leadership of the Nazi movement. Do you know what happened with this manuscript? Before I left London, Harold Laski, the Fabian socialist scholar, asked to see the study and promised to have it published. We wrote this article for Laski, but then my Communist conscience intervened: of course, the Party, which I didn't want to lose touch with, had the first claim. I showed the manuscript to the leaders of the Agitprop in New York and they wanted it. So I left it behind with Jerome, the Agitprop man, when we went to China. When we came back in 1937, the manuscript had disappeared. The Party had probably thrown it into the wastebasket.

G: Along with the work on *Autorität und Familie* [the Frankfurt Institute's work in exile in New York] you began your work on China again and you went there from 1935 to 1937 to do research to further develop the ideas outlined in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas.*

W: Yes. Of course, I had to be careful in China. I had really not yet broken with the Communists. Once in China, I stayed away from Nanking and settled in Peking with my wife. Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist government's first reaction in Nanking was that I was Moscow's new Comintern representative. When I was sent Christmas or New Year's greetings from New York, I didn't receive them. Nanking obviously considered them coded messages. Then I began working with a prominent left Kuomintang professor, T'ao Hsi-sheng, who was a pioneer in Chinese economic history and took Marxism very seriously. They realized at that point that I really wanted to do research and left me in peace. From Peking, I saw what was happening. Finally, I received an invitation from the Mao Tse-tung government to go to Yenan, but I did not accept. The Communist movement now meant Stalin, and although I was not yet ready to break with it, I was too critical of it. I simply wanted to continue my work on the development of an economic history of China.

My wife and I worked together on the sociology of the Chinese family. We had co-workers not only in the north, but also in central and south China and we traveled in

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twelve of the country's eighteen provinces. We tried to understand modern China mostly through the family as well as to develop a historical-theoretical perspective that crystallized in the Chinese History Project. It was a gigantic task. I still have 10,000 pages of translated passages from the 24 Chinese dynastic histories, which are an incomparable key to Chinese society and history. We worked on that for two years, including the time we spent on our journeys through the Chinese provinces. Then the Sino-Japanese war broke out. Was this going to destroy the results of our research? After having once lost almost everything because of Hitler, I wanted this time to do better. We did come out with our manuscripts and the results of our work.

G: Were you still in the Party?

W: Not in the German Party. But I did not want to break with the movement yet. I justified my rejection of Mao's invitation to come to Yenan in terms of the demands of my research projects. When I returned to America, I received messages to the effect that my wish was being fulfilled. The Social Democrats, the bourgeoisie, former Communists and pro-Communists were now together. I accepted that and became the co-chairman of the German-American "Popular Front," which was a variant of the United Front. Seghers was there, i.e., the Social Democrats were there, but the pro-Communist group — Paul Tillich, Erika Mann and I — were in the leadership. We wanted to set up an anti-fascist pavilion at the coming World's Fair in New York. In this connection I met Einstein again and Thomas Mann for the first time, both in Princeton. We tried everything. But in the end we still failed. We needed American money. And we had permission to get money from American pacifists and anti-Nazi forces. Thomas Mann sent me to friends in Washington to promote this undertaking. But at a certain point it ground to a halt. Certain people simply did not want to break with Germany. The U.S. still had diplomatic relations. I also saw some people who came from Germany, such as Adam von Trott. He visited me in 1940. He stood by the fireplace, and told me that I and Paul Tillich should go back to Germany. If the plot against Hitler succeeded, they wanted us back. His plan was very far-reaching. But with the pact, everything fell apart. I recall the time when we, Kisch, [Hans] Eisler, etc., met after the pact. Eisler was at that time very anti-communist and saw no difference between Stalin and Hitler. Kisch greeted me as a peacemaker. But I soon attacked his attempt to excuse the pact as worse than the others. The result was a real inner struggle for a movement that wanted to preserve or restore our original ideals. It led nowhere.

G: Then you joined forces with democratic socialism?

W: My first contact was not with American social democrats, but with radical splinter groups, former Trotskyists, Communists and left Social-Democrats. I met a man who then analyzed the Soviet Union as "a class society." For us, this was very serious. We knew that Joseph Guttmann, who had developed this analysis, had also impressed Trotsky. We were trying to find our way. That took years. Only at the end of the war did I support the American anti-Communist labor movement, where I have many friends even to this day. Conservative circles met me with understanding. The ultra-conservatives were living in another world. I remember once meeting Whittaker Chambers. As he wrote in his autobiography, he almost translated *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas* into English.

G: In your work at that time, did you try to expand the ideas in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas?*

W: The second step in my development was the investigation of the transmission of Asiatic conditions of power and exploitation to a world with a different basis of production, i.e., cattle-raising and a non-hydraulic agriculture This step led to

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*History of Chinese Society, Liao*, written between 1939 and 1943 and published in 1949. I wrote it within the framework of the Chinese History Project with a group of outstanding collaborators. The *Liao* volume covers a great conquest dynasty; it shows that the Chinese had not absorbed their conquerors. Excited by this discovery, and with the assistance of my collaborator, Feng Chia-sheng, I further discovered that the Chinese had not absorbed their Inner Asiatic masters in any of the four conquest dynasties! Our studies showed a lot more — among other things, that the Chinese examination system arose very late, that in the conquest dynasties it never produced the leadership, and that, even where it was effective, the official literati reproduced themselves as a ruling class. These and other results made our work so rich and concrete that we were praised even by cautious critics. The Liao dynasty, which previously meant little or nothing even to experts, became the most researched of all dynasties. No wonder that our *Liao* volume was called the greatest achievement of American China studies.

Work on two other dynasties had progressed considerably when politics paralyzed our work because a few important colleagues were pro-Communist. You know enough about that to understand that we are dealing with the vital question of *Democracy in America*, as Alexis de Tocqueville called it. But you also know enough to understand that this interview is not the place to discuss this. Let me quote from my monograph *China und die osteuräsische Kavallerie-Revolution* (Wiesbaden, 1978, pp. 36ff): "in the political elite of America...the debate concerning the USA's China policy...led to the posing of the question: Which forces in China and America had brought about the collapse of 'old' China." These debates were crystallized institutionally in the congressional hearings. "The first (crude and demagogic) move in this direction was made by Senator Joseph McCarthy in the spring of 1950 (it was promptly taken up by Senator Millard E. Tyding's committee and, as it seemed, successfully rejected). The investigation into the ideological and political activity of various members of the Institute of Pacific Relations, was led by Senator Pat McCarran, in the opinion of independent liberal and socialist observers, conducted very conscientiously. As a member of the Institute, I was involved (against my wishes) on August 7, 1951, in its public hearings." "In 1951 I did not understand the problems of American democracy as I understand them today with the help of Tocqueville and his modern successors (as well as Max Weber). I am not proud of the naivete with which I first tried to keep out of the McCarran committee hearings; for which, under subpoena, I spent a whole day answering questions. I am also not proud of the fact that immediately thereafter [Professor] George Taylor and I concerned ourselves with how the Chinese History Project could be saved. I had no right then to withdraw to my work, while all around me forces of an entirely different type were on the loose. An American by choice, I had occupied myself too little with the grim features of American democracy. I was vaguely dissatisfied with the way the fundamental scientific treatment of the China question was here being overshadowed by its political treatment."

The interested reader can find the relevant details described and documented in Ulmen's book, *The Science of Society. Toward an Understanding of the Life and Work of Karl August Wittfogel* (The Hague, Paris and New York, 1978). He describes how the hearings were the beginning of the end of our project, which had already been fatally wounded before the hearings by the political disintegration of our core group.

Astonishing? Perhaps. But it is just as astonishing and distinctive of the positive forces of America's democracy that I always remained a public figure, thanks to the support of understanding colleagues, liberals and anti-totalitarian socialists. Still more astonishing is the fact that since 1957 the success of *Oriental Despotism* made it

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possible for me to continue my work and to present this book as the development of important but neglected Marxian principles.

G: *Oriental Despotism* as the development of Marxian principles. Does that mean the expansion of Marxian theory, of historical materialism, from the theory of bourgeois society to a theory of global and multilinear development of world history?

W: It could be called that. Of course, economic interpretation of history was already provided by Adam Smith, the classical economists and the physiocrats. Furthermore, what Marx added must be critically identified. Like Adam Smith, I stress the importance of organization on three levels; not only in manufacturing, but also in Asiatic society (hydraulic society, resulting from organizational changes) and in Communist revolutions — such as have taken place in Russia and China. The relation of organizational to technical-mechanical developments must be recognized. Of course, both hark back to natural conditions. This was my point of departure in Germany and I have been developing it since then.

G: What does that mean in regard to the role of the organization in the analysis of Asiatic and semi-Asiatic societies? Do material forces of production lose the leading role that they have in Marx?

W: To overlook the role of organization in production and unilaterally emphasize tools and machines prevents an understanding of Asiatic societies. It obscures the unique significance of organization in Communist revolutions. It obscures the fact that these revolutions do not deal with new technical ideas and new machines. The Communists have taken over almost all machines from capitalism; they have developed a new way of using subjective factors in conjunction with objective ones. Those who emphasize changes of material and man-made elements of the production process as decisive stop with the early Marx — the Marx of Brussels and of the *Communist Manifesto*. This is surely essential for Western development. But Western development is only a fraction of mankind's development in antagonistic societies filled with class distinctions. Marx lists four of them: Asiatic, ancient, feudal and capitalist. Measured in duration, scope and number of men who lived under them, the Asiatic is by far the greatest among the pre-capitalist modes of production. To fail to recognize the subordinate role of tools and machines in Asiatic society leads to a misunderstanding of the greatest part of the history of mankind and of what is currently going on.

The decisive feature of hydraulic societies was not the introduction of new machines but the development of new forms of cooperation for controlling water under certain natural conditions. As late as 1936, I saw tens of thousands of Chinese building a new canal. They had nothing but hoes and baskets, very often they didn't even have a spade. They had the same primitive tools that their ancestors had used for thousands of years. Marx recognized this after his discovery of "Asia": mass labor there becomes a new productive force. Of course, this society also has technical features, but, as Marx says, as appendages and as subordinate elements. Locks were built, but mostly with sand and stones. The development of machines was not essential. If one does not see the relative rank of these two factors — organization and tools — one understands neither the specific nature of Asiatic society nor of manufacturing. According to Marx, this first phase of capitalism, which lasted for several centuries, was based on the reorganization of labor by the owners of capital. Machines became an essential factor only toward the end of manufacturing.

G: And your correction, if one can call it that, is that the organizational side can, and has, acquired a similar significance or objectivity as that of tools for a society's structure.

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W: No, that's not what I mean. The difference is very important in order to understand the Tatarization of Russia. The Russians did not adopt the Asiatic-hydraulic mode of production with Oriental despotism. Marx did not say that. The new system brought to Russia by the Mongols — and about which Marx has written an entire treatise — consisted in the introduction of a particular political factor. Here Marx must be explained by Marx. He saw that the Asiatic state was not an executive committee of capitalists, but a functional organization with production rooted in its original hydraulic form. The state the Tatars introduced in Russia fulfilled a series of essential tasks not fulfilled in the pre-capitalist West. Here I am not referring to the centralized military organization, which Marx only suggested and Max Weber systematically studied, but primarily to the centralized fiscal function. This function involves an institutional intrusion into the distribution of land and income that makes it impossible to regard this state as a superstructure. This state fulfilled important functions in production that Western observers have tended to overlook. Marx once said that in the West it took hundreds of years for the modern capitalist order to develop. But even intelligent socialists like Rosa Luxemburg thought that this old order would go away with a flick of the wrist. But it did not go away overnight. Lenin understood this much better, although he did not dwell on it.

G: That means, you correct the "Marxist" account of base and superstructure — a thesis first formulated rigidly by Stalin. You say that forms of organization, forms of government — superstructures that originated in other societies — can be taken over by very stable societies.

W: Yes. Lenin believed this — with vacillations. He compared the Oriental order with Oblomov, the hero of Goncharov's novel who lies immobile on the sofa. Even in his essays on Tolstoy, Lenin says that it is necessary to break through the Asiatic element predominant up to 1905. Lenin said many different things, but the insight was there. It took me a long time to understand what Marx said about Russia, namely, that it is semi-Asiatic.... Marx spoke of Tatarization as Russia's main problem. You perhaps know that the great Russia and German editions of Marx's and Engels' works do not contain Marx's writing on the Tatarization of Russia. Stalin and his successors were very wary of Marx's Asiatic interpretation of Russia. The most important remarks concerning the transmission of derivative production relations to different modes of production are in the 1857 *Introduction*, which Marx did not publish, although he says that points such as this should not be forgotten. Marx's inner contradictions — his unwillingness to endanger the great revolutionary attraction of the *Communist Manifesto*, which brought him to this confused situation — limited his analysis. This is our problem!

G: According to your analysis, then, in China and the Soviet Union we do not have a "degenerate, bureaucratized socialism," but the legacy of a state. And there is also the question whether the concept of a class — whose power was always based on the fact that its monopoly of the general conditions of production was much stronger than under capitalism — is still applicable. The question now is: How can the relation of the Party or the state leadership to the workers be understood in the Soviet Union and China?

W: That is an important question. Marx cannot be understood, unless it is recognized that from 1853 on he regarded the organization of productive forces as an essential factor. To do him justice one must accept the specificity of the state which undertakes this organization in the context of previous antagonistic societies. If one does that, then we have the answer to the question you just asked — namely, that the relation of class and state is not exhausted by the *Manifesto*, which is limited

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essentially to the West. I wrote a whole chapter on this in *Oriental Despotism*. Almost no one understood this. According to Marx, in Oriental despotism there was no class of big owners, while those who controlled the state were the ruling class. Here is the key to an understanding of modern developments like the Gulag, Auschwitz and to political and economic slavery. It is no laughing matter when one slides into his own destruction out of stupidity. "State capitalism" as an explanation is not good enough. Within Asiatic society, as Marx saw it, there needed to be nothing but the state and the working masses. According to Marx, any eventual private owners were insignificant compared with state power and its representatives. Elements of usurious capital and commercial capital could develop, but compared with the representatives of the functional state they were secondary, tolerated classes, not elements of the ruling class. So there you have it, for 5,000 years in the majority of antagonistic societies, the ruling class was not a class of private owners, but a class of bureaucrats controlling the state and the economy.

G: I want to inquire once again. I find the point important also because here it is a matter of the political consequences of your theory...

W: It's a matter of life and death...

G: ...namely, I'd like to refer to what you were saying about stability. Do you see the stability of this system as so great that compared with it the relation between the productive forces and conditions of production, which are central for Marx, is not only covered over, but replaced? In other words, isn't it possible to have a "more optimistic" perspective based on what Marx called capitalism's "civilizing influence"? Can't the incorporation of the peasants and "barbarians" into the modern production process in these states produce the "educated individual" who organizes with a certain power against this despotic superstructure?

W: Superstructure? But the functional state is not a superstructure! And even less so in the Asiatic restoration in Russia and China than in Oriental despotism!

G: Has this dialectic of the production relations and the productive forces disappeared completely from your theory?

W: Of course, I'm not unfamiliar with your argument. It sets industrial production as absolute though, according to Marx, it must be regarded as a part of society. In relatively open countries in which industrial development takes place with workers who can organize — you used the word — this is true. It partly explains the development in the Western world, for which the Marx of the *Inaugural Address* and *Capital* essentially changed his ideas on the possibility of the development of the working class and Communism. Furthermore, behind the Iron Curtain agriculture and industry did not develop freely, but are bureaucratically organized. Neither in Russia nor in China did there, nor does there, exist in big industry the possibility of free relations between critically minded workers and with like-minded people in other factories. The dissenters and *samizdat* people apparently are mostly in the cities. Only rarely do they contact with the countryside or with industry. In *Oriental Despotism* I quote Marx as saying: The first of the three major errors that must be avoided in dealing with agricultural production is to overlook the difference between the Asiatic-Egyptian and the feudal-medieval modes of production. One commits the first of all analytical mistakes if one overlooks the fact that industry and agriculture develop differently in different societies. If one does not see the specific nature of the Communist form, the result of an organizational revolution — an "Asiatic" revolution — then it is impossible to understand the behavior of its workers and intellectuals. There was more freedom in Bolshevik Russia, when industry was still small and weak. In the 1920s there were still interesting, exciting films, plays and novels. But the

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stronger industry and the bureaucratic management became, the more independent elements tolerated in public life dried up. *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* originated in a crisis situation, which permitted only limited freedom. And the day lasted really only a day.

G: The question is only: Even if we look to the East with concern, we still have the problem whether the negative utopia of a total managerial state is also detectable as a tendency in the consolidation of functional elites — of economic elites, political elites and union bureaucracies — in Western countries; whether the frightening tendency which Marx analyzed for capitalism, in which the worker loses the objectivity he once had at work and becomes a cog in a big machine, is not also becoming stronger in the West?

W: I have recognized this tendency and quoted Weber's reference to it in Germany and the U.S. Of course, there is the growth of such a bureaucracy. It is a major problem. But in the *Inaugural Address* of the First International and in the first volume of *Capital,* Marx recognized the coming of a social capitalism. According to his own description, the workers' movement was rather powerless in that period. Nonetheless, the new factory laws were passed, which Marx saw as a modest Magna Charta. There it is: not subordination, but conflict-ridden collaboration — a collaboration of unequally strong partners. Marx saw new possibilities in this; something like a partnership-capitalism, or trans-capitalistic development. In both cases, Marx said that a physical, moral and intellectual rebirth of the proletariat had taken place. But he also said something else. It is very important to see that Marx crassly contradicted himself. That is one of his tragedies. He did not always stand by what he had discovered. The idea of alienation has to be seen as he saw it in 1853 and in the 1860s. That makes his position much more contradictory, but also much more productive.

A second point is the problem of the ruling classes. You rightly pointed to the bureaucratization of modern capitalist industrial society. But it is fortunate that we have a partnership situation subdivided into three main areas: big government, big business — capitalism — and big labor. In all these areas there are major problems that have to be re-examined.

G: Is there, then, in the conflict with "despotism" any chance at all that, given the atomic balance, social change may begin? Do you see that as the task or would you rather have the Western stance be more aggressive — you seem to suggest this, I think, at the end of *Oriental Despotism.*

W: You speak of social changes, obviously meaning internally conditioned, self-developing macro-changes in contrast with macro-changes introduced from outside — results of offensive action "by the West." In a necessarily abbreviated conversation, one can simply say that Oriental despotism has been preserved for thousands of years. Internal changes were either not socially significant or, if they were, not capable of breaking the power of the existing managerial class. I already suggested this in my book *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas* and I elaborated on it in *Oriental Despotism:* the growth of new social strata with the beginnings of new classes made "Asiatic" society more polymorphic but did not destroy its basic form.

This must be emphasized if one wants to discover whether inner changes against the new despotism can achieve what they could not achieve in a history that lasted for millennia. Lenin under-estimated the institutional growth potential of an "Asiatic restoration," when he regarded its result as a repetition of the old Oriental despotism. A system that manages both industry and agriculture has a much greater capacity for preserving its domination than Oriental despotism, which controlled only the

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commanding heights of economy and society. Of course, the technical possibilities of penetration from the outside have also increased considerably — radio, TV, travel, etc. Here it is a matter of a struggle involving very unequal material, organizational and ideal possibilities. Modern managerial dictatorships from the beginning — 1917 in Russia; 1949 in China — have been riddled with internal contradictions. Nevertheless, this social totalitarianism, similar to Mussolini's nationalist totalitarianism and Hitler's racist totalitarianism, has proven successful against internal contradictions. Of course, this does not mean that internal counterforces can gain nothing from external counterforces. They can. But this does not justify underestimating the difficulties of external — "offensive" — behavior and expecting from naive concessions what only judicious action can hope to achieve. And this does not justify equating managerial with non-managerial dictatorships....

G: In one passage you see "economic planning plus effective control of the planners by the population" as the shibboleth of a human socialism.

W: Words have their place. But one must understand their real meaning. The word "democracy" is often misused. Effective control is a less imposing term. It suggests how difficult the struggle for real freedom is, which, as you know, does not coincide with absolute freedom.

G: Is your critique of "Asiatic restorations" also aimed at such despotic, military-dominated states in the Western world's sphere of influence, e.g., in South America, where trade unions are forbidden and no effective control is possible?

W: Before I answer this question, I would like to say one more thing about the problem of power concentrations in societies with strong private property — a problem that overlaps with your reference to despotic relations in countries without Asiatic roots. We know — and Marx, who pointed out the difference between "European" and "Asiatic" despotism, hinted at it — that in the West even absolutist, centralized governments exercised no absolute control over the population. We know further that big business is not as monolithic as is often assumed. At the end of his *Imperialism,* Lenin said that one cannot speak of a really centralized capitalist economy, even if only two big cartels are still fighting each other. And in the modern capitalist world the struggle for leadership results in far more than two centers. Finally, we know that some workers' movements organized as unions do not in principle exclude "socialistic" managerial dictatorships, even though, if they call themselves Marxist, they should reject it. I call attention to this point not because I underestimate the dangers of big business — they exist — or because I have a low opinion of the positive significance of an organized workers' movement; I have always considered it important that the workers be able to organize to protect their interests. But it is obvious that simplistic formulations of these forces sometimes cause more harm than good. It is also obvious that a simplistic equation of non-managerial with managerial dictatorships can inflict a similar damage.

The problem does not stop with tactical considerations: should the Communists have worked with the Social Democrats against the Nazis in the last years of the Weimar Republic? Trotsky proposed this. The question is, what did the Social Democrats really want? Did they really want a new kind of fascism? Are all dictatorships really managerial dictatorships? The Nazis' fascist dictatorship had a managerial tendency. If Hitler had won, the NSDAP would evidently have carried its managerial development to its logical conclusion. Whatever one may think of the Communists of 1931-32, they themselves were committed to the total state. The Social Democrats were not social fascists — archaic managerial tendencies struggled with objectives that counterbalanced the managerial enticement with democratic freedom.

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And here we come to the basic principle that Aristotle saw and that Marx was beginning to see when in 1853 he recognized the inherent danger of economically "functional" states. Aristotle saw the difference between a system of power whose very structure leaves no way out, i.e., Asiatic despotism, and an order like tyranny. Of all six "constitutions" of his morphology, tyranny was the worst. It was potentially the most brutal of all six. But it could be overcome from within; and it was eventually overcome. In the Greek territorial states on which his study was based, tyranny seldom lasted longer than a few decades — too long for whoever suffered under it, but not hopeless like Asiatic despotism, which no internal forces can end. Take the dictatorships in Spain and Portugal, for example. The transition from a military dictatorship to new forms of life is not easy, but it is possible. It did happen.

G: You mean that these semi-despotic military dictatorships...

W: They are not despotisms. They have a potential for development that managerial Asiatic despotism in its agrarian forms did not have. To reiterate: a combination of internal and external circumstances can of course bring about what is apparently impossible. Marx spoke allusively of a "unique" constellation, which in Russia gave a unique turn to Asiatic despotism in the form of the Tsarist regime. Marx also suggested that perhaps a second unique constellation could lead to its end. A magnificent conception! But we do justice to its possibilities only if we understand their inherent difficulties and take them seriously. Frivolous theoretical chatter and frivolous political actions, like the Bay of Pigs, are not enough. There is no substitute for hard work — solid, intellecutal work that takes seriously our great classical and neo-classical insights, including those of Marx, and the hard work of circumspective and bold action that stoically carries out what we owe to the realm of freedom.

G: And where do you see today the movement that can best combine social justice with the preservation of democracy?

W: Social democracy is one of the forces, but it had tremendously contradictory developments (e.g., Olaf Palme in Sweden). I am friendly to the American Social Democrats, who are more consistent than Palme. But I see the problem in three major forms. We need not only a decentralization of big government (the administrative bureaucracy), but also of big business, of the concentration of huge cartels, etc., and of the organized labor movement.

I believe that a non-violent anarchism proposes other ways of producing a decentralized government. Montesquieu wrote about this. Marx quoted him because his proposal apparently interested him: the transformation back into a number of smaller units. The new German introduction to my *Geschichte der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* indicates my respect for the great anarchist philosopher William Godwin. He was not an absolute pacifist. He said we must fight against certain dangers. That distinguishes him from absolute pacifists such as Tolstoy and Gandhi.

G: What you just said associates you with periodically recurring tendencies, with a syndicalistically decentralized intent, which are also latent in Marxism and are consistent with certain conservative critiques of liberalism and progressivism. All movements seek to decentralize power blocs.

W: This is, of course, very difficult. It is very difficult to cut down bureaucracies. You may recall what Weber said about that. One must not underestimate the difficulties, but I certainly approve the intention. And I believe that the implementation takes many forms. Do you know that in the 19th century a pope spoke of the theory of subsidiarism? He said: what can be done privately should not be done by the state; if it cannot be done privately, it should be done locally. Only if there is no other way to do it should it be done centrally. That is a very important insight, which

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shows a way to solve our problem.

G: Decentralization restricting the state vis-à-vis society, are those not also goals that Marx held in his later years — in his book on the Paris Commune — and which go beyond the achievement of what you have called "partnership"? That is, isn't the social ideal of Marxism a syndicalist, cooperative organization of all society? Must that be condemned to the realm of literature as utopia? It has never been realized, neither in the West nor in the East....

W: Anarchist, cocperative forces... You know that I am working on a book about Marxism and anarchism. Elements of anarchism have accompanied state-organized socialism, especially Marxism, and still do. One must see this. But one must also see that, compared with these two tendencies, the state-oriented forces have a tremendous superiority.

Marx actually pointed out in *Civil War in France* that after the Paris Commune he no longer supported the program of a state-centralized economy, which is proclaimed in the *Manifesto*. There is no doubt that here Marx wants a decentralized, production-cooperative order with the association of free, self-governing producers and with only residual powers left for the central government.... When Marx wrote *Civil War* he made three demands: no bureaucracy, no standing army and no police. He had taken that from Bakunin, of course. In this respect, the Bakunists are right. But they overestimated their influence on Marx. The weak anarchist elements in the Paris Commune were not Marx's only reference point. Since 1853 he knew of Asiatic despotism, and he knew that its centralization of economic functions did not lead to freedom but to state control of the means of production, to unfreedom and general slavery. Behind the Marxian turn to decentralization stood more than the Commune. Behind it stood the experience of thousands of years of Asiatic despotism....

G: Marx claimed that these "Asiatic despotisms" could be broken only from the outside. Haven't new destructive forces such as the atomic bomb made impossible such attempts at breaking up this system from the outside?

W: From outside and inside. Here we approach the problem we were just discussing from a different angle. Where are the masses today in Russia and China? When Mao's "cultural revolution" erupted, things seemed to be going the way they are described in *Capital*; but in fact this revolution took place on the surface of society, with the students and their supporters in the cities. Directives from above determined that the workers and peasants had to continue working. And so they did. That was no anarchist revolution, it was a pseudo-revolution, which could take place only because the activists knew what they were supposed to say and do. But this certainly did not mean the restoration of the open society and of the class struggle. There is no class struggle in the foundations of this new society in Russia and China and in derived societies. This is one of the brutal truths that must be made clear if we want to know what kind of forces are available for internal resistance.

I will sum up the whole problem with a specifically Asiatic way of posing the question, which does not wait for the atom bomb but already exists today. When Mao in 1949 extended his power over the Chinese mainland, the State Department asked me for a memorandum. In it I wrote: Don't believe that we are able to change Communist China. Our main possibilities lie elsewhere. Let us try to activate them in those parts of Asia that are open to us. Let us try to develop the social and political energies that exist there. Our main task in Asia should be India, which is accessible to us, and not the internal change of Chinese Communism, which is inaccessible. We must see the reality of Communism — the possibilities it allows and does not allow. So long as we put off consideration of Marx's Asiatic interpretation of Russia and Lenin's

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idea of Asiatic restoration because it is "theoretically" too taxing, we cannot see our intellectual and practical tasks realistically and act upon them effectively. I repeat: the "power" our destiny is connected with calls for more than a balance. It calls for a reorientation that allows us to recognize theoretically and to encounter practically the fundamental unrest in the present struggles for world hegemony.

G: As your point of departure from Hegelian and Marxian ideas of totality suggests, you have organized your theoretical works on a combination of anthropological, sociological, economic and historical principles. You once designated your intention in political theory as "moral sociology."

W: Someone called it that...

G: The word "moral" evokes associations with an activist position...

W: Of course. Morality means action. Hegel says, "A will that makes no decision is no real will." It never acts. A political man's action is not that of a saint, but he can draw strength from it for a certain kind of act. I admire Alyosha Karamazov, who walks through the world as a saint; but I see the meaning of the five vows of Buddhism, which Weber recognized as leading to action. In the world one cannot have an absolute stance; one must make compromises. Alyosha is not a political man, but he lives among political men. Under his influence the political man can gain strength to avoid the "sin against science," to carry out "stoically" — Marx's formulation — the practical tasks that are his intellectual possibility and his political duty.

*Wittfogel and Raddatz*

R: Is it correct to call you a Marxist anti-communist?

W: It is difficult to answer a question put so simply. I am no longer a Marxist, but since I divorced myself from Communism and Marxism, I have undertaken a new study of Marx. The result is a new understanding of Marx's scientific achievement. I am no longer a Marxist, but I am trying to determine a new dimension in Marxism.

R: That's already a very theoretical beginning. Your professional and intellectual career began in the arts with several dramas. Did you intend those plays merely as a political statement, or did you consider them artistic statements as well?

W: All my plays published by Malik Verlag had a political orientation. My early unpublished plays, expressionistic, were rebellious and defiant, but not political like my later published plays.

R: But you really intended the theatrical writings of your time, actually prior to Brecht — since we have to date it, let's say from 1921 to 1924, those produced in part by Piscator — more as a political act than as a belletristic feat?

W: Yes, as a political act, but in the artistic sphere and with the aid of artistic means.

R: Did your concern with aesthetic theory coincide with the concerns of this period?

W: They overlapped. I usually wrote prefaces to my plays, not because Shaw did, but because I often had something more to say. In this regard, my theoretical work paralleled my dramatic endeavors. It was probably then, early 1925, I think, that I said Brecht was the ideologue of the lumpenproletariat.

R: Did you mean his poems?

W: I meant his play, "Trommeln in der Nacht" [Drums in the Night], and the poems.

R: That was in *Rote Fahne*.

W: Yes. For a while I was the feuilleton editor of *Rote Fahne*. This work, very often that of a theater critic, led to my concern with fundamental questions of aesthetic

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theory — eventually with Hegel, who, with reference to Marx, I wanted to stand on his feet, at least in aesthetics. That was the genesis of my essays for *Linkskurve*. I assume that was what you were getting at.

R: Is it true that at that time you were already influenced by Lukacs? Didn't Lukacs play an essential role — even as a sparring partner — in your theoretical work?

W: Yes, but not before the late 1920s. In the early 1920s, Lukacs' Marxist theory was, of course, much more sophisticated than mine. I was therefore somewhat surprised when he published a review of my little book, *Die Wissenschaft der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. I saw myself being taken seriously. Later, in 1926, I saw Lukacs again in Vienna, where I was lecturing to Communist students on China and other matters. But when I wrote the aesthetics articles for *Linkskurve* (and some for Willi Muenzenberg's *Roten Aufbau*), Lukacs was not in Berlin working with us, i.e., the proletarian writers. He didn't come back from Moscow until later.

R: Lukacs' aesthetic position is actually quite reactionary. In effect, it is a closed system, defending itself against experimentation, against specific literary and artistic forms (Brecht, Doeblin). If Lukacs was really so close to your earlier theoretical works, does that mean that your aesthetic arguments were also reactionary?

W: That doesn't follow. In my judgment of art, I followed Hegel and the flow of life — not Kant, who kept an abstract distance between artistic creation and the reality of life. Lukacs' point of departure was neo-Kantian, and his continued subjectivism reveals that this corresponded to his personality. In my theoretical comments I stressed the creative significance of experimentation; in my modest attempts at art I tried to find new forms. I recall a quarrel with Piscator, it was in 1929 after a lecture I had given in which I called for the development of "guerrilla forms" — from one-act telephone plays to puppet theater. You have edited Mehring, so you know about my conflict with him, my attempt at a *revolutionary* application of Hegel, which can be seen in the new "Afterword" to my *Beiträge zur marxistischen Aesthetik*. [Wittfogel's articles from *Die Linkskurve* were collectively edited and published under this title by Andreas W. Mytze (Verlag europäische Ideen: Berlin, 1977). — *Editor's note*]

R: What does that mean?

W: It's the attempt to use Hegel's creative method, not his canon, and thereby reap the fruits of his mode of thinking for the art of both the past and the present. Moravia considers art either "antisocial or asocial." Where do we stand on the theory of art and the theory of those conditions under which art, or a certain type of art, is possible? As I noted in the "Afterword" to the *Aesthetische Beiträge*, Hegel made important comments on the possibility (and impossibility) of true, free poetry and genuine tragedy in various social structures. Under what circumstances was it possible to portray the love life of Odysseus' wife? Under what circumstances is it essential for the individual to learn a lesson from the depiction of the siege of Troy? In this regard, Troy interests me.

R: It seems to me that you are not a man of the beautiful arts. Translated, what you just said means that for you political theory was and is more important and more interesting.

W: Please, not interesting; interesting is too weak a word. And please, not "political" theory. It is a question of the theory of society and history as compared to the theory of art. Under certain circumstances, and up to a certain point, the theory of society provides the key to understanding the development of art. Under these circumstances, this theory is "more important," to repeat your term and one used by Marx in 1857 in a similar context.

R: Now, I would like to ask you how and when you turned to Marxism and, equally

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important, when you turned to Communism. When did you join the Communist Party?

W: It was *not* simultaneous.

R: It was at that time...

W: Not when I became a Marxist and socialist. Like Brecht, Korsch, Marcuse and Tucholsky, I joined the Independent Social-Democratic Party at the end of World War I. Discovering Marxism and Communism did not automatically make me a Communist. In 1920, I was teaching workers' adult education classes in economics and sociology and, in the evening, modern literature. That was the beginning of the development from pacifism, which characterized the Independents, to theoretical socialism. It was only after the split in the Independent Party in the fall of 1920 that I, along with Karl Korsch, joined the German Communist Party. I was already skeptical then about certain "ultimate truths"; I had already started to think like a heretic. To Korsch, I stressed errors in Marx's thought and in Lenin's deeds.

R: Then, at one and the same time, you were both a skeptic and an orthodox Party-line Communist?

W: Both labels fit in part. At that time, I considered the Soviet Union the greatest socialist achievement. I believed — in the 1920s — that abandoning the Soviet Union was tantamount to violating my highest principles.

R: In the course of this development, how did you come to specialize on the "Asiatic problem"? When did that begin and what brought it about?

W: Before I became a Marxist. It came from my interest in macro-correlations in world history and, in the beginning, in cultural and religious history as well. From 1917 on, I lectured on world religions, with strong emphasis on the Asiatic development. In 1919, I gave six lectures on Chinese culture.

R: But you're not really a classical Sinologist?

W: No. Later, of course, I studied Sinology at several universities. But I wasn't interested in languages and literature. I started with agriculture and the peasants. That was important to me.

R: Could you briefly summarize the crux of your model from which the title of your magnum opus, *Oriental Despotism*, derives? What is it about your theory that angered and still angers orthodox Communists?

W: Not angered. A double split occurred. In the beginning, I had no problems. When I implied in my book *Geschichte der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* in 1924 that "Asia" had a different historical development, I wasn't attacked for theoretical reasons — at that time the problems of Asiatic society weren't clear to Moscow — but because I was a friend of Lukacs and Korsch. The break became clear to me when I went to Moscow in 1928. What I had to say about China was well received by real scholars. Riazanov told me that there was much more on Asia in Marx's unpublished manuscripts. But, after I had spoken, the politicians and generals who had been in the united front in China stole away. I thought they didn't understand the China problem, but in their own way they understood it very well....

R: Wait a minute! They understood *what*? Is the core of your offense your argument that in a state-structured economic and agricultural framework there is a new class that one can call functionaries or a bureaucracy?

W: Yes. Bureaucracy as a ruling class. But I attained this insight in an uneven and, in some ways, sporadic fashion. My argument that Asiatic society could not be measured with the traditional Marxist yardstick of the class state was naive at first and was even praised in *Pravda*. It was only when Stalin gained more power that the essence of my thesis was recognized, namely that Asia — China — was a worker-and-

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official state. Officials, bureaucrats — not capitalists — as the ruling class! You understand...

R: Then not only your critics, but you yourself saw very early a diseased socialism, a growing encrustation, in short, Stalinization. How is it that you drew no conclusions from that?

W: No, no, no — not early! I didn't recognize the development in Russia early, but slowly.

R: When?

W: Oh, incredibly late. In spite of increasing criticism of details, which I discussed with trustworthy comrades, for a long time I relied on the Russian comrades and ex-comrades to patch things up. I did not want to admit to myself that the country which I considered socialist was guilty of such brutalities and conditions as I had experienced under the Nazis. Even when I broke with Communism, I did not recognize the world-historical principle. It wasn't until 1947-48 that something broke, when I discovered what Marx and Engels, especially Marx, had said about Russia and then what Lenin had said about it. Very late. Of course, I'm not proud of my slowness. The only thing I can say "on my behalf" is: With me it took a very long time. With others it never happened at all.

R: Why the previous break with Communism? After all, the realization took, as you yourself said, until after the end of World War II.

W: Yes, it was a slow dissolution. It consisted of many things. Take, for instance, collectivization. I failed to understand it in all of its horrors. Partly, not completely. Then I saw that 90 percent of the old Communists, many of whom were very close to me, were killed off. And, finally, I had seen at short range that Moscow — that Stalin — had brought Hitler to power with what seemed to me a crazy policy toward Germany.

R: But that was earlier, even before 1933!

W: From 1931 to 1933. It is difficult to make people understand. But individual Communists saw something that they did not want to accept and for which they did not want to pay the consequences. The worst thing I experienced in the Nazi concentration camp was not the beatings, or that people were buried alive, but this thought: All this for which we are suffering is a farce, because the leaders of our movement did not want to fight against Hitler; they wanted to bring him to power. But, as a socialist, I had nothing else. Where could I have gone? My break was incomplete. It wasn't thought through to the end.

R: You must allow me, as someone who is a few years younger, the question that comes up again and again in such conversation, for instance, with Ernst Bloch: How can such a process take so long? After all, everyone knew what was happening in the Soviet Union. Koestler, for example....

W: At first he didn't say anything either.

R: Not at first, but sooner than the others. He also gave up his ties sooner.

W: Yes, but Koestler's field was Europe, mine was China. I was tolerated longer in my field....

R: But there is always the news, even if you're working on Buddhism. People knew what was going on in the Soviet Union. I must protest this account. It parallels the well-known reasoning, "We didn't know anything during the Nazi regime, either." People also say, "My God, and I was collecting stamps," or "I was a specialist in Egyptian sculptures — I didn't know anything about Auschwitz." You see, the same reproach must be made of your generation with regard to membership in the Communist Party.

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W: If you say that, then you also have to say that in 1920, when I became a Communist, the Russian trains were not running and only 5 percent of the factories were in operation. At that time, the Bolsheviks had almost no power and no experience. It had never been tried. It was a great dream. For years I believed the dream would be fulfilled. I was never a Trotskyist, but for a while I agreed with the famous assessment that Soviet Russia was a corrupt society of workers and peasants. The breakthrough didn't come until the fall of 1947. It's complicated to explain why it took so long, but there is rarely one reason for something.

R: How would you fit this whole process into the history of Horkheimer's and Adorno's Frankfurt School — into their concept of fascism, if they had one?

W: The history of the Frankfurt School is protracted, as is my relation to it. Under Horkheimer, it turned away from its socio-economic orientation toward social philosophy, social psychology and cultural sociology. The treatment of these problems was subtle and noteworthy, but it was not mine. I was tolerated. Although the Institute's directors were very concerned about me when I was in prisons and concentration camps in 1933, they did not begin to analyze fascism until they came to America. Later, they withdrew from me. After that they — Adorno and Horkheimer — discovered me again.... But I've digressed — you were after something else?

R: I'd rather go back, to how a process of growing criticism of Marxism and Communism resulted in a militant anti-Communist by the name of Wittfogel.

W: That's a political shibboleth. It is reminiscent of such labels as "cold warrior," which confuse more than they clarify. It raises a gigantic problem: Is Communism or "socialism" really possible as an economicaly and politically centralized power apparatus? Once I saw that it was not possible, I fought against this attitude which, under the banner of socialism or Communism, encouraged what Marx called "general slavery." One may designate my struggle against general slavery as "anti-Communism."

R: One last question. A question that will probably make you explode. But I have to ask it. Would you go back again and testify before a McCarthy committee?

W: No, no, no!

R: That's all I want to know.

W: But I want to say more. I'm not exploding at all. I'm even extremely grateful for it. I regret only that at the end of a long interview there is so little time to discuss a question that touches on basic problems of modern democracy. I never testified before a McCarthy committee and I denounced "witch-hunting" in McCarthy's presence. I didn't even want to appear at Senator McCarran's public hearings, although in the opinion of independent liberal and socialist observers this committee proceeded very conscientiously. I complied with the official subpoena of the McCarran committee, not because I could otherwise have been sentenced to one year in prison, but because the documents discovered by this committee revealed that the Communist infiltration of certain American government offices had taken on unsuspected proportions. How seriously should one take this threat? Obviously, the possibility of a prison sentence could not decide that. To my friends, who explained my behavior in 1951 with the subpoena, I argued passionately that in this respect it would have been better if I had been sentenced to a year in prison for refusing to testify. Prison did not frighten me. What frightened me was the degree of American naivete and the proportions that Communist infiltration could have taken under those circumstances. I felt it necessary to use all available, legitimate means to defend this democracy, despite all its shortcomings and brutal features. Whoever knows the imperfection and vulnerability of modern democracy knows how difficult this decision can be. In this context, I thought of Churchill, who called democracy the worst of all governments — except for all others.

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*Wittfogel and Korzec*

K: You are best known as the author of *Oriental Despotism,* a description of forerunners of modern totalitarian systems. What do you consider to be the differences between your work and other scholarly approaches to totalitarianism?

W: Descriptions of totalitarian systems often remained confined to the observation of a few characteristics, or to an intellectual-historical approach. I believe it is unrealistic to present facts without a theoretical structure, and I also believe it is unrealistic to look at ideas apart from their material base. I consider my position as being "realistic" in the sense of Marx's expression "wirkliche Geschichte" [real history]. Forty years ago, when I was writing in theoretical organs of the Communist Party such as *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus,* I called this "historical materialism," and I believe that I would still use this term, except that it might give rise to misunderstandings.

K: According to Marx, the state had a much larger role in "Asiatic" societies than in Western Europe. This is attributed to the importance of irrigation for agriculture in those countries, and to the need for a central authority to construct and maintain a system of irrigation and drainage. What is your contribution to this theory?

W: If I were to sum it up succinctly, I would say that I emphasized above all the importance of organization as a productive power. Marx, as well as Adam Smith, certainly recognized the importance of hydraulic works for the structure of "Asiatic" societies, but neither realized that this material base at the same time generated a state form in which the appropriation of the productive surplus by the ruling class took place in a completely different way than in the West. Property relations were of little significance in the face of the monopoly of power exercised by the ruling class over the state. Once the technical requirements for a hydraulic society were fulfilled, further development ceased to take place via changes in the technology used, but occurred instead through organizational innovations. The same thing can, for that matter, be observed regarding the beginnings of capitalism. The rise of textile manufacturing was not a technological, but rather an organizational revolution. Thus, even for Western Europe, it can be shown that technical developments have not always played as decisive a role in history as some Marxists are inclined to think. I distanced myself from this particular version of Marxist determinism when I still considered myself a communist theoretician. Indeed, Marx himself was guilty of this technological determinism. For example, in *The German Ideology* he spoke about military conquest as if it were a mode of production which can be decisive for historical development. But the power of the conquerors in Asia, the power of the rulers of China or of ancient Egypt, can only be fully explained as a result of the interaction between the organizational military structures of the conquerors and the hydraulic basis of the areas they conquered. Asiatic despotism, the complete power of a bureaucratic elite over the masses, came about through the combination of organizational monopoly with the productive potential of hydraulic works. In Western Europe even the most absolutist forms of government could never attain such complete power, never exercise such an extensive monopoly of the state over society, since agriculture with rain as the basis of the water supply does not require economic centralization as does irrigated agriculture. Only in the 20th century, when industry supersedes agriculture as the most important activity, do we see the rise of modern totalitarian systems in which an exercise of centralized total power becomes possible and comparable to earlier Asiatic, despotic forms of government. Even the most absolutist and tyrannical kings of France and Prussia were never able successfully to secure a monopoly of taxation and the means of violence in the state they governed. There were always other

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centers of power, such as the feudal fiefdoms, the towns, and the Church, which continually prevented them from securing an absolute monopoly.

K: According to this reasoning, the bureaucrats and managers in the Soviet Union today are in a certain sense descendants and successors of the bureaucrats of ancient China, the imperial mandarins and officials. Your work has been attacked in the past by people who pointed out that bureaucracy in ancient China played a positive role. In general, for that matter, it is possible to view bureaucracy as a highly rational form of organization.

W: The most irrational forms of life contain rational elements. Without rationality, they wouldn't have the slightest chance of surviving. It certainly isn't necessary to have read Weber in order to know some instrumental rationality can be very useful. This is true for people in the Stone Age, as well as for the pharaohs of Egypt and modern dictators. The rational elements in the state administration of traditional China, for example the examination system as the condition for filling official posts, are significant and impressive. And yet, traditional China was characterized by forms of exploitation and oppression which were far from being rational or just. In his descriptions of capitalism, Marx made no secret of his admiration for the revolutionary, rational role it fulfilled in history; and yet, it remained possible for him to analyze the waste and oppression that that system brought with it. Communist countries also evince a large measure of technological and organizational rationality. Lenin spoke of communism as a combination of the dictatorship of the proletariat and electricity. But, on the other hand, it can be demonstrated with equal accuracy that production is not organized in a very rational fashion in a system where the peasants are deprived of control over the means of production in agriculture. The rationality of the ruling class, which seeks to maintain an economic monopoly over the means of production, is in this case contrary to social rationality. Stalin's concentration camps were a direct consequence of the fact that only through force was it possible to let Russian peasants starve. A system in which the state confiscates such a large production surplus may very well continue to have a number of rational and positive characteristics, but it will at the same time display marked regressive tendencies in other areas. As Dostoyevsky put it: from gorilla to man, from man to gorilla.

K: There are also more empirical criticisms of your work. There are societies, such as tsarist Russia, in which irrigation was of no significance whatever and which nevertheless presented especially despotic forms of government. On the other hand, we have countries like the Netherlands and Ceylon, where hydraulic works were very important and in which the central government still did not play such an important role. Don't these exceptions undermine the whole theory concerning the importance of hydraulic works for despotism, and of rain-based agriculture for feudalism.

W: I don't believe one can describe human history in such a mechanical fashion. Despotism in Russia is the result of the Mongol conquest. The social structure of the Netherlands was determined by much larger political units in Western Europe, of which the Netherlands was only a small part. Of course, I am aware of the limits of my theory. But I believe that it provides a sound basis for a global description of a number of tendencies — a number of fundamental historical mechanisms. It goes without saying that, in concrete cases, these tendencies must be tested against actual historical developments.

K: Another point of criticism might be: is it accurate to connect Auschwitz and the Gulag with events that took place in China at the beginning of the Han dynasty, more than 2,000 years ago? Isn't it better to place Auschwitz and the Gulag in the context of European history?

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W: Of course, Europeans are as capable as Asiatics of extreme forms of cruelty and excess. The tyrants of ancient Greece and the inquisition are only two examples of the less uplifting side of European civilization. But the difference between these forms of despotism and Eastern despotism is that in Europe many more built-in institutional limitations made the continuation of tyranny unlikely. In Asia, an individual despot might be made aware of signs of popular restiveness, but the apparatus of oppression would still keep on grinding. This machine of dehumanization, which undermines all human bonds of solidarity, in Europe has lasted only a short time on each occasion. In the Egypt of the pharaohs and in Imperial China the machine was able to maintain itself over thousands of years. In this regard, it is possible to point to the relatively short-lived existence of fascism in Portugal and Spain, and contrast this with the way in which the Stalinist system persisted in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death. The same tendency toward self-perpetuation was seen in the machine of oppression of Nazi Germany, which was only destroyed through outside intervention and not through self-dissolution.

K: The concept of Asiatic despotism was always controversial among Communist theoreticians. Was this less true in the 1920s, when you were regarded as a party theoretician?

W: Stalin recognized from the beginning how dangerous this concept was to the legitimacy — from a Marxist standpoint — of the Soviet system. Lenin sometimes expressed the fear of an Asiatic "restoration" behind the Soviet facade, while, on the other hand, he refrained from drawing any theoretical conclusions from this fear. Among Bolshevik leaders, Bukharin was the most aware of the implications of this theory. The political line of the German Communist Party at the time when I was a member was totally determined by the Comintern. So, when I was attacked in Moscow, as for example in 1925, I also immediately got into trouble with the German party leaders. The entire discussion was about the question of what the Comintern's policy toward China should be. It was easier to defend the then-existing alliance between the Communists and Chiang Kai-shek as long as Chiang could be seen as a bourgeois-democratic revolutionary who was fighting against feudalism in China and was thereby an objective ally of the proletariat. If we had held that no feudalism had existed in Imperial China but rather a completely different system, then the communist strategy in China would have stood on shaky ground. Such a revision of the then prevailing analysis of the Chinese situation was made possible only after 1927, when Chiang settled accounts with his communist "allies" in Shanghai. It was then that I was invited to Moscow to lecture on the Asiatic mode of production. In my audience sat Russian generals who only shortly before had still been active as advisers to the Kuomintang. Finally, in 1931, a meeting took place in Leningrad that effectively put an end to any discussion of the Asiatic mode of production. From that moment on, as long as Stalin was alive, all Communist theoreticians had to toe the line. The line was that no Asiatic mode of production had ever existed and that the development of humanity was unilinear: from primitive communism via slavery, feudalism and capitalism to socialism and communism.

I was then supposed to have been thrown out of the party, had it not been for the fact that I had come to regard this whole theoretical debate as less important than the need to fight Hitler. But in this area, too, I discovered very quickly that the Comintern's policy was not completely in line with the seriousness of the Nazi threat. The German communists didn't like the Nazis; they knew quite well that they would be Hitler's first victims when he came to power. But Stalin, who in the meantime had eliminated all opposition within his own party and within the Comintern, had a

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different opinion. Besides my anger at the suppression of Marx's perspective on the Asiatic mode of production, I also had more reservations about Stalin's policy of collectivization. On my last visit to the Soviet Union I met a woman, a Volga German who answered my questions about collectivization only with "We are starving." I never forgot that meeting and her words. My attempt to visit Russian villages was rejected then. It was a time when millions of Russian peasants perished from hunger. At that time I understood only part of what was happening in Stalin's Russia. Only in the 1940s, after I had done research in China and after I had already been living in America for some time, did I begin to see Stalinism more and more as a restoration of the old Asiatic despotism.

K: In 1923, Lukacs, Korsch and yourself were approached to work with the Institute for Social Research, later known as the Frankfurt School. Was this because you were then regarded as non-orthodox Marxists?

W: The question of whether or not I was a communist did not play much of a role in my collaborating with the Institute. It was a gathering place for people who for the most part were not actively engaged in politics. What was more important was a scholarly interest in Marxism. All sorts of people worked together in the formative period of the Institute — Social Democrats, Communists, and even Richard Sorge, who later became a top spy for Moscow in Tokyo. At that time, there was absolutely no difference between orthodox Marxism and other forms of Marxism. There was only Marxism. Adorno, who later came to symbolize the Frankfurt School, was then completely unknown.

I don't think I was ever a communist apparatchik. I was too interested in scientific truth, and I also had too much respect for socialist ideals. I was a member of the Communist Party for 17 years. It has been 40 years now since I broke with the Party. But, of course, the Communist movement influenced my thinking and probably continued to influence it even after I was no longer a Party member.

# SOCIALISM AND BUREAUCRATIC COLLECTIVISM IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES*

## by Umberto Melotti

Bureaucratic collectivism can be defined as a modern class society based on specific relations of production that set workers and bureaucrats at opposite sides. Characterized by an enlarged production (similar to capitalism's) bureaucratic collectivism is clearly different from all precapitalist societies of simple reproduction (ancient, Asiatic or feudal) as well as from traditional capitalist society, which sets the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. As with all class societies, bureaucratic collectivism can be distinguished by its specific form of exploitation. A comparison between the

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form of exploitation characterizing bureaucratic collectivism and those of other major class societies will help clarify the nature of this recent social formation.

The Asiatic mode of production where relations of production coincide with so-called "general slavery,"[1] is characterized by the appropriation of surplus product from the collective labor of village communities with common land ownership for the benefit of a privileged class made up of civil servants in a centralized, bureaucratic but non-modern state; the latter emerges as the only land owner by means of property taxes and collective forced labor (in this connection, the distinction between property and ownership is crucial). This type of exploitation which for centuries and even millennia characterized the history of many non-European countries like China, India, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Peru, Mexico, etc., does not entail the separation of the worker from the means of production but instead — as with other antagonistic modes of production with the exception of capitalism — it implies extra-economic forms of coercion.

The ancient mode of production whose highest phases coincide with the "slavery" of private right is distinguished by appropriation on the part of a privileged class of masters — already private landowners — of the physical person of the worker himself, as a means toward appropriating all or almost all of his labor power. This type of exploitation, which characterized for several centuries the history of classical antiquity and especially Greece and Rome, implies the worker's separation from the means of production as well as extra-economic forms of coercion.

The feudal mode of production, which coincides with serfdom, is distinguished by direct appropriation of the surplus product of serfs on behalf of lords who combine in their hands private land ownership and political power. This type of exploitation (characteristic of medieval Europe and Japan) does not entail the worker's separation from the means of production but does imply extra-economic forms of coercion.

The capitalist mode of production to which corresponds "wage labor" is characterized by direct private appropriation on the part of the bourgeois class of surplus value produced by proletarians, i.e., formally free workers (in the sense that, unlike slaves, they are not the owner's private property, nor do they have ties of personal dependence to a lord, like feudal serfs). The workers, being neither owners nor possessors of the means of production, must sell their labor power to survive; thus, their liberty is purely formal and without substance. This type of exploitation implies the worker's separation from the means of production (generally achieved by violence

1. Marx's expression — derived from Hegel and already anticipated by Montesquieu with reference to classical Greece — is rather unfortunate. It seems to imply that all workers and even all subjects of Asiatic societies were slaves — which is not true. In reality, while Asiatic community villagers were the objects rather than the subjects of law, they were not slaves owned by a class of masters. Montesquieu himself had also distinguished Asia's "political slavery" from the Western-type slavery of individual right (slavery pure and simple as understood in ordinary discourse). It is important to remember that the concept of "general slavery" was originally nothing but the other side of an ambiguous term applied to Asiatic societies, i.e., despotism. In Greek, "despot" means master and especially master of slaves. Ancient Greeks who thought the condition of Asiatic subjects humiliating and unacceptable considered them all slaves and called their sovereigns "despots." Of course, the ethnocentrism of Greek culture had a large part in this attitude, which also bequeathed us with the term barbarian, originally designating foreigners. Greeks of the privileged classes forgot all too easily that their own democracy rested on the labor of real and genuine slaves who generally lived under conditions not much better than those in Asia. Later, Marx also stressed this point, thus correcting the 17th and 18th century sources of ethnocentrism together with his own views in his early works. As he wrote, "under slavery, mass servility, etc., the worker is one of the natural conditions of production for another individual or for another community (this is not the case with general slavery in the Orient, but only from a European point of view)." Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (Berlin, 1953), p. 395.

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at the stage of primitive accumulation), but once established, no longer entails forms of extra-economic coercion. Therefore, exploitation does not require the specific ideological mystifications that usually characterize other antagonistic social formations. It is "open exploitation, without shame, direct and ruthless" that, as Marx wrote in the *Manifesto*, replaces "exploitation veiled in political and religious illusions."[2] Under capitalism, mystification manifests itself at the same socio-economic level where commodity fetishism tends to make relations among things appear like relations among men.[3] However, under capitalism it is possible for workers to conquer spheres of freedom (in trade-unionist, political and cultural organizations), in addition to those organically provided by the system — freedom in the consumption market.

Bureaucratic collectivism coincides with state enslavement of the labor force, i.e., with general serfdom — to use an expression analogous to Marx's Asiatic mode of production. This mode features a privileged class of modern state leaders without private ownership of the means of production who appropriate the surplus product of workers; the latter are neither formally free, like proletarians under capitalism, nor subjugated to individual lords, like mob-serfs, since their relation to particular social rulers does not entail bonds of personal dependence as is typically the case under the feudal mode of production. This type of exploitation implies generally but not necessarily (as in *Kolhoz* cases) the worker's separation from the means of production as well as forms of extra-economic coercion, effected not through the market, as under capitalism, but rather through a plan that, when stripped of its pseudo-democratic mystifications, is imposed from above. Thus, as with precapitalist forms of production, bureaucratic collectivist exploitation is not mystified on the economic plane and requires heavy ideological mystifications. In precapitalist modes of production there is religious or political mystification of exploitation; under bureaucratic collectivism it often takes the form of a degraded and canonized Marxism reduced to a squalid dogma to be interpreted for the personal use and consumption of the bureaucrats themselves.[4] Moreover, in special cases where bureaucratic collectivism represents the modernization of an Asiatic or semi-Asiatic mode, it often retains a persistent semi-religious mystification in the form of a cult at the top of the system's vertical axis.

Hence, under bureaucratic collectivism, a superstructural instance becomes dominant, as also happens in precapitalist modes of production and, for similar reasons, where the religious instance takes on this character (e.g., in Asiatic mechanical-charismatic or feudal formations); or the political instance dominates, as in classical antiquity. Under capitalist formations, the determining function of the economic structure becomes manifest without any external mediation. In addition, exploitation under bureaucratic collectivism is exercised individually by single members of the privileged class (as with antagonistic social formations in the Western lineage of historical development — slave, feudal and capitalist society). It is instead the collective action of a privileged class that (like the Asiatic mode, its generally most immediate antecedent) those who derive at least part of their income not from their but from that of others, through the mediation of the state, make up. For this reason and, because of the ideological mystifications mentioned above, it becomes difficult at

2. Marx and Engels, "Manifest der kommunistischen Partei," *Werke* (Berlin, 1956-68), Vol. 4, p. 465.

3. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital,* Vol. 3 (1867), chapter 1, part 4.

4. See Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism* (London, 1958). Cf. also Oskar Negt, *Marxismus als Legitimationswissenschaft: Zur Genese der stalinistischen Philosophie* (Frankfurt, 1970).

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times to identify the class character of a bureaucratic collectivist society — particularly in countries where low levels of development in the forces of production limit the social excesses that can be appropriated by an exploiting class. In these societies, pseudo-socialist ideology and the moralistic invocations on the equality of charismatic leaders can also help to diminish the acquisitive tendencies of the privileged class and to render differences among social classes less evident than in capitalist countries with comparable levels of development; in capitalist societies, these ideological instances function unevenly, literally storming through models of vast and ostentatious consumption. Of course, this is not to suggest that under bureaucratic collectivism there is no privileged class, but simply that its privileges are not identical to those of a capitalist class.

Non-Marxist socialists in developing countries have defined socialism in many ways. Thus, Nyerere has claimed that socialism is only a mental attitude[5] and similar positions can be found among all socialist leaders of underdeveloped countries. Besides, Mao himself, who gave much weight to the superstructure (think only of the cultural revolution he promoted in order to change this mental attitude), often glossed over or minimized the importance of structural aspects,[6] thus falling into untenably subjectivist positions.

For Marxists, however, socialism is something more: it is a classless society, intrinsically founded on non-antagonistic relations of production that would allow for the progressive overcoming of the residue from preceding class societies, i.e., the hierarchical division of labor, state organization, inequality, as well as the mental attitudes that characterize class societies. For Marx and Engels, socialism differs from communism precisely in the persistence of such residues. In particular, under socialism, unequal attitudes of individuals are still recognized as private privileges. Hence the principle "to each according to his labor" is to be substituted only by communism's "to each according to his needs."[7] Marxists, nonetheless, see socialism as a society free from exploitation, if not one free from inequalities. This is the fundamental feature differentiating socialism from class societies, either those with private ownership of the means of production or those with collective class ownership (Asiatic society and bureaucratic collectivism).

The definition of socialism provided at times by supporters of current experiments in developing countries (e.g., "a system based on economic democracy, i.e., on workers' participation in the choices and the social goals of production"),[8] is ambiguous and reductive insofar as it veers away from this fundamental and structural trait: the absence of exploitation. Economic democracy, participation in production choices, the social goals of production, etc., are all nice things but certainly cannot replace the abolition of exploitation since they are meaningful only because they are its specific corollaries. If exploitation continues, "economic democracy," the goals of

5. Julius K. Nyerere, "Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism," in *Freedom and Unity* (London, 1967), p. 162. On Nyerere's and other African "socialist" leaders' idea of socialism, see Anna S. Piergrossi, "Il Socialismo Africano e l'Esperienza della Tanzania," in *Terzo Mondo* (December 1973), vol. 6, pp. 73-91.

6. It is significant that Mao should openly criticize the Soviets for "being interested *exclusively* in the relations of production." Cf. Mao Tse-tung, *On Stalin and the USSR* (Turin, 1975), p. 11. Emphasis added. If only the Soviets would pay "exclusive" attention to the relations of production!

7. Cf. Marx, "Randglossen zum Programm der deutschen Arbeiterpartei" (1875), in *Werke, op.cit.*, vol. 19, pp. 18-22.

8. Antonio Carlo, "Autenticità e contraddizioni del socialismo in Cina," *Terzo Mondo*, vol. 8 (December 1975), p. 10.

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production, etc., are mere mystifications, much like political democracy in capitalist societies and all the talk about participation among bourgeois sociologists and Christian-Democratic politicians. Even if we concede the absurd, namely, that economic democracy and participation could be compatible with exploitation, they still would not suffice to qualify a society as socialist: as long as there is a state, political democracy is also indispensable qua democratic administration of the state, of the party or parties and of other social organizations, including the army.

Commenting on the experiences of the Paris Commune, Marx outlined some fundamental features of political changes necessary in a socialist society: (1) dissolution of a permanent army to be replaced by an armed population; (2) universal suffrage election for responsible councillors, revocable at all times, to an assembly that operates as a labor organ and not one with legislative and purely decorative functions; (3) transformation of the police from an organ of the central government into a responsible organ of the assembly, revocable at every moment and stripped of all political functions; (4) similar transformation of all other administrative branches; (5) genuine democratization of public services that must stop being the central government's monopoly and brainchild, to be compensated at workers' wage levels throughout.[9] Although the Paris Commune constitutes a particular historical case, the above requirements need not be relinquished.

These basic aspects define socialism as a social formation in transition to communism characterized by a development in the productive forces at a level at least equal to that of advanced capitalism in the same epoch, by non-antagonistic relations of production amenable to a rational utilization of resources for social, rather than private, ends; also, by a distribution in accordance with everyone's actual labor, by the democratic orientation of social life and of a state progressively withering away, especially in conjunction with the parties or political movements that lead it.

Defining socialism as the "revolutionary transition from capitalism to communism" without specifying its fundamental characteristics[10] is a dangerous repetition of the old Stalinist formula where teleology and vagueness provide an ideological cover-up of a pretty miserable state of affairs. Since communism is still to come and every social formation in our time can easily be presented as transitional, such a definition is applicable to all modern societies and particularly to bureaucratic collectivist ones.[11] This definition is quite compatible to the mytifications of bureaucratic-collectivist ideologies. It reinforces the identification of socialism with a long period of exploitation and bureaucratic domination teleologically justified through a vulgar dialectic, in the name of the "future good" still to come in a classless society. This is why it is necessary to make it clear that socialism is not some vague society in transition toward equally vague future communism, but a society *without exploitation, without classes, with a state on the way to extinction, managed democratically* and not in a

9. Cf. Marx, *The Civil War in France* (London, 1871), p. 17. Carlo has summed up these characteristics in his "The Socio-Economic Nature of the USSR," in *Telos*, 21 (Fall 1974), pp. 2-86.

10. Cf. Carlo, "Autenticità . . .," *op.cit.*, p. 31, n. 106. Lacking these specifications, Carlo's reference to Marx remains purely formal.

11. It is not surprising that with this kind of attitude, Walter Ulbricht, one of the most Stalinist of Eastern European bureaucrats, could have depicted socialism in a way that even pro-Soviet communists such as Sereni (who insists on considering bureaucratic-collectivist countries socialist) acknowledged as "a crystallization of difficulties, of slackness in the building of socialism and of advanced socialist democracy which actually conceals the urgent need for overcoming such difficulty and slack." Cf. Emilio Sereni, "Da Marx a Lenin: La Categoria di Formazione Economico-Sociale," *Quaderni di Critica Marxista*, 4:1 (1970), p. 78.

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despotic, bureaucratic or totalitarian fashion.

Socialism and bureaucratic collectivism have nothing in common. Yet many confuse them, and not just interested pseudo-socialist ideologists of bureaucratic-collectivist countries. In the historical experience of the West, classes happen to be tied to private ownership of the means of production. Now, even among Marxists, "ownership" is understood only in a juridical-formal sense and is confused with some of its historical forms that particularly pertain to Western history (i.e., private ownership in Roman law, or modern bourgeois ownership). Wherever these forms of private ownership are absent, there is a naive tendency to believe that exploitation and social classes do not exist. Caught in this type of reasoning, there are some who view as socialist even ancient societies of oriental despotism founded on the Asiatic mode of production. [12]

However, exploitation and classes in no way depend on the existence of private ownership in a juridical-formal sense, but antagonistic relations of production. Western-type private ownership is only one of the possible expressions of such relations. The juridical fiction of ownership aside — be it private, as in the West, or statist or pseudo-public, as in the East — the relations of production remain crucial. In fact, there is some type of ownership (in the Marxist sense) in all societies founded on antagonistic relations of production because, for Marxists, ownership can only mean that the means of production are operated by some persons (workers) but are controlled by others (social rulers) who draw private benefit by exploiting the former.

These relations naturally include those of the oriental line of historical development — the Asiatic mode of production and bureaucratic collectivism. Specifically, under bureaucratic collectivism, property no longer emerges as an individual condition but as a collective situation of social rulers, i.e., as *collective class property* of bureaucrats and pseudo-socialists. Rizzi is right when he says, with reference to the Soviet Union, that "in a simplistic way we are told that property has been 'nationalized.' This is no problem for scientific Marxists.... Trotsky also added that the distribution of products is such that the bureaucracy gets the lion's share. The question here is what kind of 'nationalized' property is this, managed exclusively by a class that also reaps the product just as shamelessly as the old bourgeoisie? In effect, in Russia there is an exploiting class that controls the means of production and behaves exactly as if it owned them. Ownership is not divided among its components but they, as a bloc, a class, are the real owners of the entire 'nationalized property.' "[13] In bureaucratic collectivist countries, property pure and simple has not been abolished as their ideologues and apologists maintain; only some historically particular type has — capitalist property and-or semi-Asiatic or semi-feudal property. Anybody formed by the West's historical experience has difficulty understanding this but, in countries of bureaucratic collectivism, it is not so for workers who know only too well who their real

12. For a classic misunderstanding on this issue, see Louis Baudin, *L'Empire Socialiste des Incas* (Paris, 1928). His views were also adopted by other Third World writers such as Eduardo B. Astesano, *Nacionalismo Historico o Materialismo Historico* (Buenos Aires, 1972). In a chapter entitled "The Ancient Socialist Cultures of the Third World," Astesano idealizes oriental despotism. In contemporary politics this confusion is probably best exemplified by Nasser's 1962 Chart of National Action which affirms that "since very ancient times, agriculture has achieved genuine socialist solutions to very comnplex problems, notably irrigation and drainage which, for a very long time, have been part of Egypt's public services network.'" Commenting on this, an intelligent Arab Marxist says: "For socialism, we are thus presented with that hydraulic society which was at the base of oriental despotism." Anwar Abdel-Malek, *Egypte, Société Militaire* (Paris, 1962).

13. Bruno Rizzi, *La Bureaucratisation du Monde* (Paris, 1939).

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bosses are.[14]

Another factor contributing to the widespread identification of bureaucratic collectivism and socialism was vulgar Marxism's unilinear conception of historical development.[15] According to this conception — already prevalent during the Second International and later canonized by Stalin — all societies go through the same stages of historical evolution (primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism) and capitalism is necessarily followed by socialism, just as capitalism replaced feudalism. That bureaucratic collectivism (unforeseen by the canonical system) could take shape at a time when capitalism was already deeply rooted in many countries and was even dominant worldwide facilitated the identification with socialism in bureaucratic-collectivist countries, where its advent was long awaited. The revolutions marking the transition to bureaucratic collectivism came *after* the great bourgeois revolutions in the West and were also led by parties calling themselves communist or by other movements more or less progressive: for many militants, to consider them socialist and extend this qualification to all ensuing societies was an idealistic manifestation of internationalist solidarity. Some may have even seen these revolutions "against *Capital*," to use Gramsci's expression,[16] since, if considered socialist, they belied Marx's indications that, while predicting the possibility of revolutionary outbursts in Russia and China, did not expect socialism to be realized first in backward oriental countries but in the more advanced Western capitalist countries.[17]

Historical chronology, however, is hardly enough to prove the socialist character of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, because the actual process of historical development is not as unilinear as depicted by vulgar Marxists. In fact, bureaucratic

14. In Eastern European societies, China, Tanzania and all bureaucratic-collectivist countries in general, among working classes there is a growing awareness of the leading group's class character. In the USSR, where reference to "comrade bosses" is frequent even in commercial movies, the opposition literature has worked out the concept of *nomenclature* to identify those members of party and state bureaucracy who simultaneously control politics, economy and ideology and who collectively appropriate, each according to his opportunity, the surplus of the people's labor. Cf. Dimitri V. Pospielovski, "Ideological Theses and Constructive Political Proposals of the Democratic Opposition in the USSR," *Shakti*, VII:4 (New Delhi, 1970), p. 33. In China, before and after the cultural revolution, Mao himself denounced the fact that many leaders behaved in the same way "and even worse than capitalists," thus exhibiting the "mentality of slave masters." Mao Tse-tung, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

15. Cf. Umberto Melotti, *Marx and the Third World* (New York, 1977).

16. Antonio Gramsci, "The Revolution against *Capital*," originally written in 1918, now in Pedro Cavalcanti and Paul Piccone, eds., *History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci* (St. Louis, 1975), pp. 123-126.

17. Marx, of course, had forseen the possibility of (non-socialist) revolutions in Russia and China even before a (socialist) revolution in the West. Yet, for Marxists, "the revolution sought by modern socialism is a synthesis, the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and the rearrangement of society by the suppression of all class differences" and that, as such, "it postulates not only a proletariat to accomplish this radical transformation but also a bourgeoisie in whose hands the social forces of production will have reached a level of development that will make possible the suppression of all class differences." Cf. Engels, "Soziales aus Russland," in *Werke, op.cit.*, vol. 18, p. 556. For populists, however, every oppressed people is by definition always prone to revolution. Lenin comes much closer to the populist position than do Marx and Engels by maintaining that Russia's industrial backwardness and its embryonic capitalism would be an advantage rather than a disadvantage for social revolution. Mao held similar populist positions: "in Western countries it is very difficult to make a revolution and build socialism because the noxious influence of the bourgeoisie is very profound there and has penetrated everything. In China, the bourgeoisie is only three generations old.... The truth is that the more economically backward a country, the easier, not the harder, is its transition from capitalism to socialism. The poorer a man is, the more he wants a revolution." Mao Tse-tung, *op.cit.*, pp. 49-50.

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collectivism belongs to a line of historical development quite different from the one that prevailed in the West. Instead of a succession from slavery to feudalism and capitalism, this line moves from the Asiatic mode of production to bureaucratic collectivism. Actually, the passage to bureaucratic collectivism constitutes a relatively autonomous form of modernization for societies founded on an Asiatic or semi-Asiatic mode of production where neither capitalism nor feudalism ever became dominant. The revolutions marking this passage, aside from being viewed as socialist because of the function they objectively accomplished, are considered on a par with the great bourgeois revolutions that, with the passage from feudalism to capitalism, seated the fundamental moments of rupture in the process of Western modernization.

The allegedly progressive character of these revolutions in the East and in other Third World countries has also encouraged their identification with socialism — an implicit equation between socialism and progress. But with respect to precapitalist social formations, capitalism too represented progress, although this cannot in any way sustain the identification of capitalism and socialism. Those who perceived bad consequences following from the progressive character of Eastern European and Third World revolutions but who were not able to formulate the problem critically — either because of implicit adherence to the old unilinear system or confusion between social formation and world system — have at times denied the progressive function of these revolutions by emphasizing their regressive character.[18] However, this view is inadequate even if bureaucratic collectivism objectively appears as a less developed social formation than advanced capitalism since in its relatively autonomous form it developed only in countries where it would have been impossible to develop an independent capitalism. Bureaucratic collectivism can be said to have a regressive character only in countries where it was transplanted from the outside. After the war, this was the case with Eastern European countries following military occupation by a powerful bureaucratic collectivist country that forcibly outfitted them with a self-styled ready-made socialism that testifies to its thorough dysfunctionalism through permanent crisis, always leading to the same reactions, often suppressed by the force of arms (East Berlin in 1953; Poland and Hungary in 1956; Czechoslovakia in 1968; Poland in 1970 and 1976).

For developing countries, however, the establishment of an endogenous form of "national" bureaucratic collectivism to replace an underdeveloped and dependent capitalism has helped to encourage the erroneous confusion of bureaucratic collectivism and socialism. What is forgotten is that the progressive character of bureaucratic collectivism in those countries is *relative to its point of departure*, i.e., the Asiatic or semi-Asiatic mode, already on the way to degeneration following the impact of Western capitalism or to colonial and semi-colonial capitalist forms. What also contributed to the confusion is the fact that social revolutions paving the way to bureaucratic collectivism were for the most part led by Marxist-inspired parties and movements. Clearly, however, the role played by such political forces during the revolutions and in ensuing governments does not mean that the countries concerned became socialist. The presence of socialist and communist leaders in the government is certainly not enough to make a country socialist. Socialism cannot be defined by the personal whims of social leaders.

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18. Bruno Rizzi has stressed the regressive character of the Soviet revolution and maintains that bureaucratic collectivism is nothing but a "feudal regurgitation"; *op.cit.*, p. 57, note 6. Karl A. Wittfogel also terms the Russian and Chinese revolutions "regressive"; see his *La Rivoluzione* Sociale in Cina alla Luce del Marxismo," *Terzo Mondo*, 27 (1975), p. 101.

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# Book Reviews:

David Halberstam. *The Powers That Be.* Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1979. 771 pages. $15.00.

During the 1960s and far into the 1970s, the various institutions that came to be known collectively as the media were fair game from attacks on the left flank as well as the right. In the first case, the broadcast networks, news services and press were seen as part of a larger, monolithic military-industrial complex, playing the role of its flack. In the second case, the media were viewed as engaging in a sinister conspiracy to undermine the foundations of American democracy. (Who will soon forget Spiro Agnew's description of them as the "nattering nabobs of negativism?"

Watergate was probably the single most important factor in calling the bluff of these clichés. It served to reassure those inclined to side with Nixon that truth will out; the fellow was a snake in the grass, as things turned out, but all's well that ends well: he's out of office, the press and its freedoms are intact, and no one has suffered any lasting harm. For the young and callow left — or what was left of it by then — journalists and certain network reporters became heroes.

But Watergate was, by all accounts, a historical fluke. It could just as easily have gone unreported at the time, to be discovered only long after the principals in the case had gone on to meet their reward or whatever. Watergate was by no means the only scandal — or, it could be argued, even the most important one — to be carried out at the top levels of United States administration. Time and again, it turns out, the American public was lied to and deliberately deceived by its policymakers over the course of the last two decades. With Kennedy, there was the Bay of Pigs invasion; with Johnson, the Gulf of Tonkin attacks; with Nixon, the bombing of Cambodia. And this is all just the tip of the iceberg. Yet only recently has there been any attempt at full disclosure of the circumstances leading up to such events and the concomitant attempts to hornswoggle the American public on so wide a scale.

Halberstam makes great strides in this direction. In his history of Time, CBS, the Washington Post and The Los Angeles Times, he exposes the limits on the media as exemplified in four of their most influential representatives. The press, nowadays regarded breezily as a devil-may-care, slap-happy institution that quickly and irreverently gloms onto the least hint of impropriety, is, rather, one of the most easily intimidated, hesitant and spineless organizations in American society today. That unbridled freedom of expression guaranteed in the First Amendment appears, in Halberstam's book, to have become so encumbered by fears of restrictions — real and imagined, commercial and legal — that it is now almost paralyzed. Those few occasions when the press does manage to break out of its paralysis and startle the public with its revelations are the exceptions that prove the rule. They, more than any single statement or theory concerning the press's freedom, graphically show just how limited that institution really is.

In the course of exploring these limits, Halberstam shows how they are transcended from time to time. What emerges is a picture of the media not as some sort of univocal monolith, but as an institution beset by contradictory forces tugging at it from all sides. And it is precisely this play of opposing forces that goads the publishers, network executives, and reporters into tackling those questions that ultimately give the media their finest moments — and the public its best and most vital knowledge.

These forces are many and varied, and range from the sublime to the scurrilous. Of the more sublime order is the journalistic call to inform the public, deriving from a

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deep-seated conviction that an informed citizenry is the backbone of democracy. This is not to be confused with the desire simply to expose, the driving principle of "yellow" journalism and a force that tends toward the more scurrilous pole. In between there are those forces that are neither lofty nor lowly, the mundane interests of filling the news hole, of selling the papers or recruiting advertisers, of not stepping unnecessarily on toes that might kick back hard. Not surprisingly, these are the factors that figure most predominantly in routine news coverage. They tend to produce comfortable stories that rock few boats, that startle few readers. Those stories that are real blockbusters, on the other hand, generally spring from a conflict involving those forces that occupy the far ends of the spectrum. And Watergate provides one of the most compelling examples of this, with what was worst in the Nixon administration serving to bring out the best in the media.

By 1972, the print and broadcast media had come to be perceived as exercising an almost diabolical power over public opinion. Much of this can be attributed to the role television coverage of the Vietnam war played in gradually pitting growing segments of the public against administration policy. Halberstam documents this development in great detail. The contradictions between official accounts of progress against the Vietcong and what television newsmen and cameramen were witnessing were nowhere more obvious than on the nightly news. Vietnam was a story that was not, unlike Watergate, geared for the news page. Time and again, Halberstam shows, correspondents in Vietnam for most major newspapers and magazines filed reports that devastated the optimistic pablum offered up by official spokesmen, only to have their accounts blunted — or, even more frequently, omitted altogether — by their editors back home, whose perceived interests in currying favor with Washington made them predisposed to reject their war correspondents' reports. (The New York Times' critical coverage of the war in the early years is a notable, laudatory exception.)[1] By and large, the print media did not have that significant an impact initially in influencing public opinion against the war. Even when critical accounts did manage to make their way into print, they were generally discounted as the work of sniping, East Coast liberal reporters who were only interested in using the war to take pot shots at a government that they didn't like to start with.

Television provided the real breakthrough. Morley Safer, a CBS correspondent in Vietnam, happened to accompany a contingent of Marines on the day they leveled Cam Ne. His story, backed up by film, was a turning point in television coverage. So strong it was that it could not be ignored or shunted aside by even the most timid of network executives (pp. 498-490). The public was quick to respond: "The evening news has a kind of ripple effect because it goes out at different times to different time zones, and so each hour on the hour or the half hour a new time zone's worth of good Americans called in to scream their anger at CBS for doing something like this, portraying our boys as killers, American boys didn't do things like that. Many of the calls were obscene."[2]

1. *Time* magazine was perhaps most notorious in this respect. Halberstam recounts how its war correspondents, among the best in Saigon, were so frustrated by their complete failure to sway the magazine's management against accepting at face value the Pentagon and White House reports of progress in the war that two of them quit and another finally yielded to pressure to leave the Saigon bureau against his will. Pp. 467, 477.

2. Halberstam continues: "Among the obscene phone calls was one received the next day by Frank Stanton (president of CBS)... and it came from his great and good friend, the President of the United States.... 'Frank,' said the early-morning wake-up call, 'are you trying to fuck me?' 'Who is this?' said the still sleepy Stanton. 'Frank, this is your president, and yesterday your boys shat on the American flag,' Lyndon Johnson said, and then administered a tongue lashing: how

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If Safer's report prepared the way for public criticism of the war, Walter Cronkite's reporting after the Tet offensive served to expand that criticism, making it no longer a cause embraced only by draft dodgers and effete East Coast snobs, but popularizing it, making it respectable. In his report from Vietnam after the Tet offensive, Cronkite "said that the war didn't work, that a few thousand more troops would not turn it around, and that we had to start thinking of getting out.... In Washington, Lyndon Johnson watched and told his press secretary...that it was a turning point, that if he had lost Walter Cronkite he had lost Mr. Average Citizen. It solidified his decision not to run again" (p. 514).

By the time the war finally wound down, then, the nightly news on television had become a sort of gauge the public used to measure a given event's importance. This at first worked against exposure of what came to be known as the Watergate scandal. When Woodward and Bernstein began to unravel the events that led up to the break-in at the Democratic Party's national headquarters, their stories were complicated and did not lend themselves to the short synopsis format that characterized television news stories. Watergate "was not only complex, it was almost totally subsurface, it demanded great and careful cultivation of sources, enormous patience on the part of reporters and editors, and staff." It was, furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, a story "without proof and without film" (p. 653). The networks' decision against committing themselves to cover Watergate was reinforced by the failure of most of the nation's major newspapers to pick up on the story quickly. "During the campaign, when Woodward and Bernstein were writing some of their most important stories (and the period when the Nixon administration least wanted Watergate covered), from the middle of September to election day, NBC devoted a total of only 41 minutes and 21 seconds to covering Watergate. ABC gave it 42 minutes and 26 seconds. Even that coverage was more often than not perfunctory; the Democrats and Larry O'Brien Charged, the Republicans Answered.... Yes, the Washington Post was legitimizing the story every day, but in the headquarters of television executives and television news executives the Post was hardly the index of the day's events that The New York Times was. The Times was doing poorly on Watergate" (p. 651).

But even the Washington Post's own coverage of Watergate was chancy. Had Nixon not hated the paper so much, perhaps Katherine Graham would have been able to "normalize" relations with the White House, as she was clearly eager to do. Had Nixon been able to establish any ties at all with the Post management, perhaps the Watergate story would have been nipped in the bud. As things developed, however, once the story began to unravel, Nixon had no real power to stop it, despite his threats to bring the FCC down on the Washington Post's holdings. The cordial ties that linked earlier presidents to East Coast publishers and broadcast executives were non-existent in the Nixon White House. By the time the story was breaking, Nixon had so antagonized nearly all segments of the media — a remarkably difficult thing to do, given management's predilection to ingratiate itself with whoever happens to occupy the White House — that he could not summon anyone of note to rise to his defense.

What broke the story wide open, of course, was Woodward and Bernstein's discovery of the connection between the burglars at the Democratic headquarters to Nixon's Committee to Re-elect the President. Even after the Los Angeles Times and the New York Times began to pick up on Watergate and competition escalated to get the newest angle on the story, television news continued to give Watergate as little

could CBS employ a Communist like Safer, how could they be so unpatriotic as to put on enemy film like this?" P. 490.

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coverage as it could get by with. CBS was the only network to cover the story with any sense of "real obligation," Halberstam notes. Still, even CBS did not decide to plunge into the story until right up to the eve of the presidential elections. Its report — a two-part series, designed to run an unprecedented 28 minutes — derived largely from accounts that were published much earlier in the Washington Post. Little new ground was broken. Nonetheless, only with this series did Watergate become an issue that demanded public recognition (pp. 655-656).

The White House sensed the importance of the broadcast. Although it was able after the first segment was aired to get CBS to trim the second segment (by way of Charles Colson's threats to Paley), Nixon was not appeased. Through Colson, again, Nixon let CBS know that "when Richard Nixon got through with CBS there was going to be damn well nothing left. They were going to take away the five owned and operated stations — the real source of CBS's wealth" (p. 661).

By this time, Nixon's churlishness and vindictiveness had become all too clear to both the publishers and network executives, on the one hand, and the reporters and correspondents, on the other, for them even to think of allowing him the benefit of a doubt in the Watergate affair. His threats were regarded almost as a dare, and rather than serving to stifle the investigation, they could almost be seen as fueling it.

This same process was also at work in Congress, whose members for years had seen their own role in shaping foreign — and to a lesser degree domestic — policy shrink to the point of near irrelevance. This was an issue that Congress was very sensitive to, and it was linked closely to the presidents' effective use of television. Beginning with the Kennedy administration, television had become a tool in the president's hands, which, when properly used, gave the president more national influence and prestige than any holder of that office had enjoyed before (although Roosevelt's "fireside chats" could be regarded as a step in the direction of presidential manipulation of the broadcast media). By the time Nixon was elected in 1968, television had come to focus almost exclusively on the president, with Congress sharing little of the limelight. In part, this stemmed from the president himself exploiting television to his fullest advantage, but it was also attributable in some measure to the utter failure of House and Senate leaders to use this medium to further Congressional interests (pp. 245-246).

By the time the Senate Select Committee on Watergate began its hearings in the spring of 1973, its members had come to appreciate the important role television could play. When the first witness was called on May 17, the flurry of sudden disclosures to the press by participants in the burglary of their ties to the White House had made Watergate the biggest story in the country, and the networks, having already cleared coverage with the Senate, televised the hearings live, gavel to gavel. The effect on the public was remarkable: "Right before the Ervin committee hearings 69 percent of the American people approved of Nixon's presidency; by July that figure was down to 40 percent.... By mid-June 67 percent of the American people thought Nixon was involved in Watergate" (p. 697). It is impossible to know what would have happened had the hearings not been televised, but given the role that television had come to play in shaping public opinion, it is probably difficult to overestimate the networks' contribution to Nixon's demise in their decision to broadcast the hearings.

When Congress began its hearings, the process for Nixon's removal from office — voluntarily or otherwise — was under way. At this point, the role of public opinion, whether for or against Nixon, became less important, yielding to the determination of Congress to see for itself what sort of shady dealings the president had engaged in. The momentum to carry through with the investigation was borne now by those who, in the event of impeachment, would serve as Nixon's prosecutors and judges. (This

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diminution of the weight of public opinion should be considered briefly. Had public opinion continued to be a determining factor in deciding Nixon's suitability for the office of president, perhaps the man would have had a better chance of completing his second term. By the time the issue of the burglary and subsequent cover-up attempts finally made its way to the House impeachment hearings, most of the public had lost a good deal of its interest in the story. Less than a month before Nixon's resignation, a poll showed that 53 percent of those questioned thought media coverage of Watergate was excessive.)[3] Although the public, like Nixon, had grown tired of the constant coverage, Congress had only begun to realize the extent of the man's effrontery, and was consequently spurred on even though public interest flagged.

Nixon's resignation surely brought a sense of relief to all parties involved: the public, the press, Congress, the Justice Department and, no doubt, even Nixon himself. In an effort to bring a quick end to this national embarrassment, which had been dragging on for three years, trying the patience of even the most faithful readers and viewers, the press was all too eager to let bygones be bygones. Halberstam notes (p. 703) the conciliatory, forgiving tones used in the coverage of Nixon's speech announcing his resignation: the press was, quite literally, generous to a fault in its reception of Nixon the night of August 3, 1974.[4] The press's desire not to appear vindictive, combined with Gerald Ford's quick pardon, served to bring an end to any further disclosures.

There can be no denying that the press was crucial in establishing the political climate that led to Nixon's downfall. Yet time and again, Halberstam shows just how tenuous and fragile the Watergate coverage was. Had any one of a number of circumstances been absent — Nixon's avowed contempt for the Washington Post, for example; Woodward and Bernstein's having received the initial assignment to cover the break-in and subsequent trial; the accidental disclosure of the White House recording system — it is likely that the whole story would have fallen by the wayside. Those who point to Watergate as a sign of the untrammeled powers of a healthy press are simply off the mark. If anything, the fact that the story squeaked by the countless impediments to its full disclosure is a journalistic miracle. Certainly, much hard work went into following leads and digging up the sordid details of the kind of shenanigans carried out by Nixon's plumbers, but it is not unusual for the best of reporters to run into one dead-end after another, even when that reporter is convinced that he or she is onto something big.

It is ironic, then, to realize the detrimental effects that the Watergate coverage has had on the press itself. For those who have long claimed that the press's powers were too broad and reporters' rights to protect sources too threatening, the whole affair is taken to point up the fundamental soundness of American media in the second half of the 20th century. In this view, Watergate shows the strengths of a press that, despite such strong odds, is able to come through in the clutch. The press, now so righteously smug and cocksure of itself, can stand being brought down a notch or two, and needs to be reminded that it functions at the pleasure of the government. Consequently, there has been a growing effort to straitjacket journalists in the Ford and Carter administrations. The courts have made libel suits easier to press, and reporters' rights to confidentiality harder to defend.[5] And such developments are all too easily

3. See Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, *The Final Days* (New York, 1976), p. 254.

4. For an insider's account of the way CBS disgraced itself that night, see Daniel Schorr, *Clearing the Air* (New York, 1978), p. 114.

5. For fuller accounts of these developments, see Tom Wicker, *On Press* (New York, 1978), especially chapter 12; and Anthony Smith, *Goodbye Gutenberg: The Newspapers in the 1980s* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming 1980).

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obscured from the public view. The court cases that set precedents in such matters are usually technical, difficult for all but the most avid readers to follow, and — what may today be most important — rarely afford good "picture opportunities," thus being denied any meaningful coverage on television news. While the public continues to cling to its view, shored up by Watergate, that press freedoms are thriving and the press itself flourishing, the very foundations of a free press are being nibbled away.

These foundations, however, appear to be strongest only when no one is trying to build anything on them. Halberstam's exhaustive book clearly shows the inverse relation that exists between the press's pursuit of its adversarial role and its perceived freedoms. When controls on the press are non-existent — perhaps dormant would be a better term — is precisely when the press is most pliable and uncritical in its recounting of the goings-on of those in power. The 1950s epitomize this: there was little friction between the White House and the media, aside from Murrow's exposure of McCarthy, not because the Eisenhower years were so bland or free of scandal, but because the media's interests coincided with those of the administration. The era of family-dominated newspapers was still strong, and the scions of journalism had a personal interest in being able to influence administration through their news coverage and editorial endorsements. Luce's influence on the United States' policy toward China, Norman Chandler's decisive backing of Nixon's checkered political career; the ties between Philip Graham and the Kennedy and Johnson administrations — all these links were known before Halberstam wrote his book (although, to give credit where it is due, he documents these ties more thoroughly than has ever been done before).

With the passing of the family newspaper, however, and the increasing management of publications as just another kind of business, it was inevitable that the cozy ties between publishers and network executives, on the one hand, and those who represented political authority, on the other, break down.

The focus of publications and networks turned more to their product — what they had to sell — and away from their prior concern with providing a mouthpiece for the publishers' or owners' particular views. In fact, the latter were becoming more and more irrelevant. Readers now started to form their opinions and make their judgments on the basis of a paper's news content, and no longer relied on the editorial writers to tell them how to vote. And whereas once even the news content had been molded by the publication's editorial stance — which in turn reflected the publishers' leanings — those who reported the news and edited it now had greater autonomy to get into print whatever they saw fit.

In this climate, the press gradually came to occupy a more adversarial position. And as the reporters' ability to pursue a story grew, unencumbered by the former restraints imposed by the publisher's interest in foisting his own views on the public, so did the reporters' awareness of the limits they worked within. This did not occur overnight. For many years the issue of national security, for example, was taken at face value by reporters and publishers. Only after Watergate has this term come to be rather cynically regarded, in most cases, as a red herring designed not to protect any vital national interests so much as to hide skeletons in the White House closets. For the most part, as Tom Wicker has shown, the constraints that bind most journalists today are *not* the sort of economic ones that vulgar Marxists used to believe hid behind every action.[6] Over the years, a certain autonomy has come to hold sway in the newsroom to

6. Wicker provides a very good account of the way journalists — himself included — have tended to walk within chalk lines drawn only by themselves. See *On Press, op.cit.*

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the point where now almost any subject can be tackled without fear of the writers' or editors' being called to task by the advertising end of the business. (Fear of alienating advertisers still exists, but it operates more subtly now. For example, most papers will not allow stories about lung cancer to appear on the same page as cigarette ads, or news of plane crashes on the same page as airline ads. In the broadcast media there is generally even less intimidation from advertisers who are, on the whole, so eager to get slots on popular programs that only rarely will they consider withdrawing sponsorship because of any critical content in the broadcast itself.) Today's limits on journalists are internal ones: the desire to be "stroked," to be an insider, to be allowed access to sources of power, to be told confidences. These more than anything else throw the journalist off the track and curtail his or her willingness to pursue a story to its logical conclusion.

But this is changing, and the controls on the press are rapidly becoming more codified and external. As reporters and broadcasters have become more aware of the ways that they have allowed themselves to be used and manipulated in the past, the internal controls can no longer be counted on to function effectively. That is one of the primary reasons why, in the post-Watergate Ford and Carter administrations, there has been an increased effort to specify ever more narrowly those areas to which the press shall be granted access. Closed courts are becoming almost routine in trial coverage; the definitions of who may bring libel and slander suits grow ever wider; penalties for those who leak classified information — regardless of the issue whether it has any business being classified in the first place — are getting stiffer.

What will the ultimate effect of this be on the press? If publishers are forced into a corner, they may very well decide to stay there rather than go to the mat for their reporters' rights to pursue a story and for their readers' rights to know — a battle that could, in any event, result easily in a Pyrrhic victory, given the print media's ever-narrowing economic base. At this point, the role that television would take becomes decisive. By joining forces with the print media, television could help in the effort to fend off encroachments against a free press and free airwaves. But historically, television has regarded its news coverage as secondary to its entertainment function; by and large, it draws its news from the daily papers. Further, the affiliate owners have never really regarded themselves as being in the business of journalism and, as such, have never come to see themselves as defenders of First Amendment freedoms — a role that even the most crassly commercial of publishers will readily cast himself into.

If newspapers wither, television news almost certainly will follow suit. The whole idea of "news" itself — a roughly defined body of knowledge that a given set of people can be presumed to share — is called into question. In an age of increasingly specialized publications, and with the diversity of programming offered by developments in cable television, one will no longer be able to take for granted that the public in a given city, region, or nation will be acquainted with what made headlines in that day's paper or what the lead story was on the evening news. And the implications this has are frightening in their enormity.

*Patricia Tummons*

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David Lane and Felicity O'Dell. *The Soviet Industrial Worker: Social Class, Education and Control.* St. Martin's Press: New York, 1978. 167 pages.

While the society that has been created in the Soviet Union and Soviet-style states is clearly not a dictatorship *of* the proletariat, it is not easy to demonstrate how it creates a dictatorship *over* the proletariat. General conditions — the suppression of all unauthorized political and cultural expression, the dependence on the state for all measures of collective security, the authoritarianism of politically appointed bureaucratic and managerial personnel — affirm the absence of democracy, but the specific position of the working class in these arrangements is hard to categorize. In part, this difficulty is related to three unresolved empirical questions. First, how is the formation of the working class in the socialist states affected by the timing and the tempo of industrialization? Second, what are the implications of the "socialist" context of this working class, in terms of nationalization, state ownership and state management of the means of production? Third, within the Marxist tradition of the concept of social class, what class represents the counterpart, or the adversary, of the working class, and where is the arena of their confrontation?

But the problem of characterizing the working class under socialism also grows out of two general, connected issues that perpetuate a methodological Gordion knot: the nature of the argument and the nature of the evidence. On the one hand, the type of evidence that can be produced in and about these societies imposes limits on the arguments that can be made. In the absence of regular, reliable and precise data, arguments play upon concepts of low specificity and dubious explanatory value (e.g., "scarcity," "waste," "historical necessity," "totalitarianism," "the Asiatic mode of production"). On the other hand, the nature of the argument that is being made determines the use to which existing evidence is put. The longevity and centrality of certain revolutionary leaders, for example, inspired a whole literature based on the "cult of the personality" argument, and this argument, in turn, shaped the presentation of data on state-building, ideology and economic strategy so that institutions and policies seemed to be reflections of the leader rather than of social reality. Or, for example, the institution of *nomenklatura* (political appointment) has been used to demonstrate both political "interference" and, more rarely, "popular" control.

Despite these problems, a trenchant critique of aspects of socialist society can and does emerge (e.g., Solzhenitsyn on the Gulag Archipelago, Alexandr Zinoviev or Vladimir Voinovich on bureaucracy, Konrad and Szelenyi on intellectuals, Bahro on the wearing-down of the individual in everyday routine), but its power to convince derives from its own powerful conviction or the enormous moral burden of the material. Generalization is more often based on anecdote and apocrypha than on the rigorous analysis of empirical data. For a time, in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the 1960s, a new or a heightened interest in sociology implied that this pattern might be broken. The sources of the resurgence of empirical social research diverged. Among bureaucrats, the empirical tradition of classical sociology and the methodology of modern public opinion and industrial research represented a pragmatic way to improve pro-regime sentiment and productivity. Among critical Marxist intellectuals, the same tradition and research represented a way of exposing regime abuses and defending reforms "from within." This duality of purpose is reflected in the circumstances that surrounded the brief life of the relatively independent empirical sociology that emerged. At its height, around 1963-65, that

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research was connected with proposals for economic decentralization and enterprise autonomy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and hopes for reforming the Party in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary. By 1968-70, the crushing of the Czechoslovak Reformation and the hopes for Polish and Hungarian reforms, as well as the gradual abandonment of almost all premises of the economic reformers, coincided with the withdrawal of official support for any empirical social research that could be used against the regimes. Even so, the value of the research that was done was circumscribed by the questions that were asked, the categories of analysis, and the logical schemes in which the data were utilized. Except for studies that dealt with specific social problems like poverty, the data that were generated by this research fit best with a functionalist argument.

Given the connection between the nature of the argument and the nature of the evidence, it is not surprising that depictions of the working class in socialist society follow three simple analytic methods: induction, deduction and functionalism.[1] First, some observers of socialist society follow an inductive method. They select a big concept — usually related to alienation or exploitation — from the arsenal of Marx's writings, define the workers as alienated or exploited because they fulfill one or more of the conditions that the concept describes in terms of capitalist society (e.g., powerlessness vis-à-vis the production process or the production of surplus value), and place whatever empirical material they care to discuss within the framework of alienation or exploitation. Alternatively, following a deductive method, other observers use certain types of aggregate worker behavior, especially drunkenness, shoddy workmanship, or pilferage, or observations of systemic economic irrationality, for example, in terms of high labor turnover or erratic production rhythms, and conclude from this evidence that workers, as a class, are oppressed, or alienated, or exploited. Furthermore, they use such behavior as evidence of workers' resistance to their oppression. The third method of analysis, functionalism, purports to avoid both the rush to judgment and the soft data of the inductive and deductive approaches. However, as any post-Parsonian sociologist knows, the functionalists' claim to neutrality is false. Moreover, Soviet and East European data on inter-generational social mobility, access to educational institutions, work attitudes, use of leisure time, political membership, occupational preferences and rankings, and public opinion are not the hardest. Taking these data at face value, functionalist analyses of Soviet society conclude, broadly, that the system as a whole works. It works the way any industrial society that is committed to social welfare and social mobility as well as to economic growth could be expected to work. In Soviet society as in any other, there are norms, values, processes, and institutions that fit workers into their place in the social order. As long as Soviet workers work, functionalists assume that all sub-systems are functioning and a basic equilibrium is maintained.

So far, the few excellent discussions of the Soviet working class that have appeared have been historical — and thus conditional — analyses rather than attempts to conceptualize the working class according to the "structure" or "nature" of either the Soviet Union or socialist society.[2] It is significant that these discussions take place in a

1. It must be emphasized that hardly any writings focus on the situation of the working class in the socialist societies. The glimpses that we have into working class life, aside from the studies of Soviet and East European functionalist sociologists, come mostly from descriptions by intellectuals. This lack of analysis is due to at least two reasons: the political barriers to doing research on workers in the "workers' states" and the under-representation of workers among Soviet emigrés.

2. See Gabor T. Rittersporn, "The State Against Itself: Social Tensions and Political Conflict

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framework that is concerned with the politics of a socialist state and its policies of labor mobilization, and how these change over time. But I doubt whether "atomization," as some of the better authors put it, is the best concept to describe the working class under existing socialism. Nor does "corporatism," as a recent writer suggests,[3] relate to the political structuring of classes in socialist society. On the one hand, such a concept must depict the sources of individual action as well as individual inaction, e.g., the possibilities for effective individual protest by workers in "closed" Soviet cities and enterprises as well as the apparently benumbing effects of an increased access to consumer goods in Hungary.[4] On the other hand, this hypothetical concept should also convey the idea that the unorganized workers can — indeed must — bargain with the state over working conditions, wages, distribution of goods and services.

To some degree, atomization does get across the first set of ideas, particularly if we add to it an understanding of a dynamic process of institutional fragmentation, as in Yugoslavia, where decentralization into the smallest imaginable units and selection of a myriad of specialized *delegacije* (delegations) contribute to the impossibility of establishing any sort of base for the effective representation of a coherent set of interests. But atomization does not suggest conditions in which workers can negotiate with or put pressure on the state. It does not even indicate that the possibility of workers' common action exists. (Is Poland, then, completely different from Hungary and the Soviet Union? If so, then it is surely not because Polish society is less "atomized" than the other two in the way that such discussions present the concept.) And corporatism, with its implication of some class-based organization rather than mere proportional representation, is just plain wrong.

So the functionalist analysis has the effect of reversing the previous "conservative" Western tendency to believe that Soviet workers are too oppressed to be able to express their deep-seated discontent and rebelliousness. Significantly, the functionalist analysis of workers in socialist society, as it is practiced in both the West and Eastern Europe, accepts as given a certain amount of systemic economic failure (particularly, the inefficiency in the organization of production and the low priority of the production of consumer goods) and assumes a certain stabilizing force in political mobilization (through Party membership and ideological campaigns). Because there really is no way that functionalists can make sense of the whole economic and political context that systemic economic failure and systematic political mobilization imply, they simply ignore it. Unlike induction and deduction, functionalism does not enable its users to make large claims about the nature of the Soviet or Soviet-style system and the position of the working class in it.

In a new book on *The Soviet Industrial Worker,* British sociologists David Lane and Felicity O'Dell try to have it both ways: to make a big statement about the Soviet working class by using a functionalist method. So they engage the inductionists and deductionists on their own conceptual grounds, the supposed alienation of Soviet workers. In contrast to those who find that Soviet workers are alienated, Lane and

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in the U.S.S.R.," *Telos*, No. 41 (Fall 1979), pp. 87-104, and "Héros du Travail et Commandants de la Production: La Campagne Stakhanoviste et les Strategies Fractionnelles en U.R.S.S. (1935-1936)," *Recherches*, Nos. 32-33 (1978), pp. 249-275; Viktor Zaslavsky, "The Regime and the Working Class in the U.S.S.R.," *Telos*, No. 42 (Winter 1979-80), pp. 5-20, and "Socioeconomic Inequality and Changes in Soviet Ideology," *Theory and Society*, No. 9 (1980), pp. 383-407.

3. Daniel Chirot, "The Corporatist Model and Socialism," *Theory and Society*, No. 9 (1980), pp. 363-382.

4. Zaslavsky, "Regime," *op.cit.*, p. 5; Ferenc Feher, "The Dictatorship over Needs," *Telos*, No. 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 31-42.

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O'Dell contend that workers are continually integrated — "incorporated" — into Soviet society in a smooth, non-conflictual way that precludes the formation of either classical, oppositionist working-class consciousness or contemporary "privatized" working-class consciousness.[5] Indeed, they find that Soviet industrial workers lack the essential characteristics that make a social class into a social actor: a fairly unified, if not uniform, class position; a set of demands that is not being met; a sense of corporate identity that distinguishes them from other groups in the society; and a distinctive class culture that, in key respects, diverges from, merges with, and resists encroachment by the practices of the dominant class.

Lane and O'Dell also use the multidimensional quality of the concept of alienation to argue against its relevance to the situation of Soviet industrial workers. For them, the keystone of alienation is the deprivation of the working class *as a class* by the relations that are established by *capital*. In part, the old Stalinist conjuring trick (if classes are defined by juridical property relations, then state ownership eliminates the basic condition for their existence) enables Lane and O'Dell to dispose of the entire issue of alienation (pp. 44-45). Partly, too, the absence of a property-owning class that expropriates surplus value for itself dilutes the salience of what they call " 'alienation' in a *Marxist* sense" (p. 44, italics theirs). This is not convincing proof. And having disposed of the general concept, it is only sloppy for them to concede that intra-class stratification, technology, and a lack of worker-initiated control over production "give rise even in a Marxist sense to partial forms of alienation" (p. 45). Their description of class interests in the Soviet factory as "common" but not unified (p. 45) recalls Ossowski's much older notion of "non-egalitarian classlessness" without Ossowski's sense of a critical Marxist analysis.[6] While Lane and O'Dell have met the more generalist observers of socialist society on their conceptual grounds, they have hardly rebutted the usefulness of the critical theory that underlies concepts like alienation or exploitation.

Indeed, their willingness to discuss alienation suggests some serious contradictions in the authors' thinking. On the one hand, they want to use — if only to rebut — a Marxist argument, to apply Marxist terminology, and to treat the Soviet Union without prejudice. On the other hand, of course, they are functionalists, and they consider the use of technology, the allocation of the work force, and the division of labor as the results of a neutral social process rather than as the consequences of a specific process of politicizing the economy (p. 15). The combination of functionalist method and Marxist sentiment is related to another basic contradiction in the authors' framework, a contradiction between the dynamic social processes that are implied by their emphasis on social mobility and the static social relations that are implied by their emphasis on social control.

Although Lane and O'Dell present a large amount of empirical data from Soviet studies, their unquestioning acceptance of the data — and the behavioral concepts that these data are supposed to indicate — encourages the reader to be skeptical. They focus on three major areas of socialization: schooling, political participation, and on-the-job training, work, and friendship groups. The cumulative effect of socialization processes in these three areas, from cradle to grave, or at least, in this

5. Here, of course, Lane and O'Dell are arguing that the "affluent worker" model that was elaborated during the 1960s to describe the working class in late capitalist society does not fit the Soviet working class, which is lured less by consumer goods and attracted more by in-plant activities.

6. Stanislaw Ossowski, *Class Structure in the Social Consciousness,* trans. Sheila Patterson (London, 1963).

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book, form kindergarten to pension, is to fit the worker to his or her niche in society. According to Lane and O'Dell's reading of Soviet surveys, some interviews with vocational school administrators, and some pedagogical material, Soviet workers learn the skills that are necessary for the industrial jobs that are available, they learn to respect these jobs and to feel responsible for the operation of their factories, and they learn to derive comfort and satisfaction from the approval of their peers in traditional, industrial and voluntaristic collectives. Workers who fail to conform to these norms become the flotsam and jetsam of the socialization process. They are badly trained, under-educated, and unskilled. For most Soviet workers, in Lane and O'Dell's view, socialization practices provide training, nurturance and involvement.

*Involvement?* Here the skeptical reader must raise questions both about context and about content. What does involvement mean in the context of a socialist state? What do Lane and O'Dell's data on involvement mean when they are compared with other sorts of observations?

As in many sociological discussions of industrial society, Lane and O'Dell relate involvement in work to levels of education and general social activism. In the Soviet studies that they cite, indicators of work involvement include behavioral and attitudinal factors (e.g., socio-political organizational membership and participation, participation in unpaid and campaign-style labor, on the one hand; survey responses to questions on work attitudes, on the other). Lane and O'Dell's discussion remains limited to the aggregates of these studies. They do not try to convey an understanding of either the life of the individual or the operation of the whole society, both of which exert pressures and express needs that motivate behavior and attitudes. Nor do Lane and O'Dell discuss the significance of global politics or global economics. Yet the strategies of labor mobilization, labor mobility, and labor control that are determined on that level have a crucial effect on class formation. An account of the Soviet working class must describe a historical process of industrialization that includes both labor shortage and hidden unemployment, forced collectivization of agriculture and forced labor, emulation of Taylorism and "socialist emulation." The actual production process — really, the various types of production processes — and the categorical imperatives of the centralized economic system, as they affect workers, must be discussed. If Lane and O'Dell want to justify Soviet labor practices, then they must deal with factors that have been negatively stressed by other observers, e.g., the under-mechanization of Soviet industry, the discrepancy between qualification level and work tasks, the evasion of responsibility in both management and production, and the operation of piece-rates, norms and bonuses. Lane and O'Dell's reliance on their Soviet data on behavior and attitudes recalls a social historian's remark in a somewhat similar context, a polemic over the "quiescence" of the British working class: "To concentrate on working-class response and revolution is like trying to understand a punch by looking at the bruise, not at the fist."[7]

Lane and O'Dell's acceptance of the involvement of workers in socio-political organizations, and the involvement of these organizations in workplace labor mobilization and production decisions, ignores three basic issues: the interpenetration of occupational and political hierarchies, the content of participation, and the precise level or organizational milieu of the participants. First, they do not speculate that careerism rather than career may act as the motivational link between job involvement and political involvement. Although they indicate that the Communist Party recruits

7. H.F. Moorhouse, "History, Sociology and the Quiescence of the British Working Class: A Reply to Reid," *Social History* 4 (1979), pp. 485-486.

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"opinion leaders" among the workers, they apparently do not imagine that this selection may involve a self-selection of manual workers who want to move quickly, via party membership and party school, to supervisory positions in production, or a number of comrades who find "involvement" compatible with surveillance over fellow workers. Second, the involvement of party and trade union branches in factory affairs — which pleases Lane and O'Dell (pp. 24-25) and some other foreign observers[8] — may have a repressive effect on workers' freedom of action. Trade unions in the socialist states have frequently been used to make workers work more and work harder; party recommendation or ratification of the appointment of managers probably has the effect of emphasizing political conformity and connections. Again, the question of context is crucial for evaluating the meaning of participation. While trade union and political party involvement in work life may connote some degree of worker opposition in capitalist societies, it suggests a means of control over workers in the socialist states. The third issue that Lane and O'Dell ignore is whether workers themselves, the meeting of the party or union branch, or the branch's executive committee participates in workplace decision-making (pp. 24, 26). If the gap between rank-and-file members and organizational activists in other societies (including Yugoslavia) is universal, then the level of the participants makes a great difference in the content of their participation.

The unresolved tension between the data, on the one hand, and their context, on the other, also undermines Lane and O'Dell's presentation of Soviet ideological precepts about work (chapter 4). During the socialization process, as Lane and O'Dell describe it, these precepts assume the status, first, of moral givens and, then, of behavioral norms. These norms promulgate the necessity of discipline, the dignity of labor, and the relation between work and patriotism (p. 56). Although Lane and O'Dell do not use this terminology, these norms help to establish a hegemonic labor discipline, where labor control becomes subject to self-control and workers are "incorporated" into the dominant value system. When incorporation is considered in this way, certain questions must be asked: For whose power is this hegemony established? What were the historical circumstances in which particular norms developed? What are the norms of resistance that develop or that persist in opposition to the hegemonic norms?

While Lane and O'Dell tend to dismiss the possibility that anti-productivity work norms signify resistance rather than faulty socialization, they do mention two types of data that counter the official norms. First, in attitude surveys, workers and their children express aspirations that the children will be able to enter non-manual occupations. Second, Soviet workers engage in absenteeism, alcoholism, pilferage, and other deviations from correct workplace behavior. As Lane and O'Dell note — in the words of another researcher — "this is deviance, not dissidence."[9] But this may be qualified through further interpretation.

Their interpretation of unrealistic aspirations to climb into non-manual from manual strata is stronger on consequences than on causes. Apparently, slogans and ceremonies that honor blue-collar work and multi-generational blue-collar families cannot offset some dynamic that ascribes prestige to scientists, doctors, educators, and engineers (p. 75). Because young people tend to apply in greater numbers than the

8. E.g., Göran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?* (London, 1978), p. 90.

9. Walter D. O'Connor, "Workers, Politics and Class Consciousness," in A. Kahan and B. Ruble, eds., *Industrial Labor in the USSR* (New York, 1979), p. 325.

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higher educational institutions can admit, the school system takes on the additional function of "cooling out" high career ambitions that cannot be satisfied by the Soviet economy (chapter 6). But does cooling out have other effects that eventually show up in work-related behavior? Another researcher has suggested that some young people deliberately hold themselves off the labor market (in voluntary unemployment) in order to reapply to the technical schools where they cannot find places.[10] Once they are on the job, workers may seek material compensation in the form of bonuses for overfulfilling production norms. However, the lack of latitude for enterprise managers — who have neither the authority nor the funds to increase material rewards above certain set limits — also affects these workers. They develop their own work strategies, from various forms of disrespect for — or disbelief in — "social property" to cutting corners, "looting" or "cheating the norm," in order to make the wage they feel they deserve.[11]

Whether absenteeism, alcoholism, and other types of deviance constitute a conscious working-class strategy depends, in part, on how widespread such behavior is. Lane and O'Dell claim that this behavior is mostly restricted to younger and more recently industrialized, hence less incorporated, workers (pp. 70-71). But other evidence suggests that these discipline problems arise among workers in their thirties and workers with long experience in the labor force.[12] Certainly, there are external factors, such as traditional socio-cultural patterns and the coexistence of proletarianization and subsistence agriculture (many workers in the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Yugoslavia derive income from small agricultural plots), that help explain particular absences from work. However, if this behavior can be characterized as class practice, then there are grounds — *contra* Lane and O'Dell — for interpreting it as part of a persistent, marginal, working class subculture.

Finally, Lane and O'Dell's analysis of work norms does not consider the possibility of a contradiction between, on the one hand, the labor theory of value that is shared as part of an ideology, at least to some degree, by all social strata in the socialist states and that is realized as part of economic policy, again to some degree, in the relatively low wage differentials, and, on the other hand, the moderately coercive philosophy of labor mobilization that underlies such institutional features of socialist states as entitlement to wages, benefits, and certain citizenship rights through the workplace; public criticism of shirkers; and a social security system that discourages reliance on "welfare" rather than work.[13]

But the problem of interpreting norms in the proper context is almost a minor issue, compared to two other problems that Lane and O'Dell treat as peripheral to their analysis: the inclusiveness of the Soviet working class and the nature of working-class grievance. Their definition of the working class in a Soviet-style society includes non-

10. Philip Grossman, "The Soviet Government's Role in Allocating Industrial Labor," *ibid.*, p. 48.

11. On workplace incentives for workers' lack of consideration for social property, see O. Antonov, *Dlia vsekh i dlia sebia* (Moscow, 1965); on looting, see Miklos Haraszti, *A Worker in a Worker's State: Piece Rates in Hungary*, trans. Michael Wright (Hammondsworth, 1977).

12. Alex Pravda, "Spontaneous Workers' Activities in the Soviet Union," in Kahan and Ruble, *op.cit.*, pp. 339-340, and Haraszti, *op.cit.*

13. On this last point, see Alastair McAuley, *Economic Welfare in the Soviet Union* (Madison, Wis., 1979), p. 267: "The belief that people would rather live in idleness at the expense of the state than seek useful employment is embodied in much current Soviet social security legislation. Most benefit programs include a wage-stop clause to the effect that cash receipts cannot exceed what a person would have earned (or did earn) when employed, and benefits are usually tied to earnings, length of employment, and the period of uninterrupted employment."

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manual workers who are employed in the productive sector. "This is because in a Marxist sense their relationship to the means of production is the same as that of manual workers: all are wage-earners employed in state-owned enterprises; all contribute directly to production in the national economy; all to some degree share a similar political ideology. Technicians, craftsmen, skilled workers and engineers in production form the highly educated, socially aware and most politically active part of the working class" (pp. 4-5). While this definition accepts a certain amount of internal stratification of the working class, it implies unification instead of bifurcation, consensus rather than conflict. How can we reconcile that view with the devastating "we-they" split that other observers describe? Haraszti, for example, reflecting on the syntax of the factory worker's linguistic code, considers the "they, them, theirs" that the worker uses to refer to all superiors: "*Them* are all those upon whom he depends in an elusive and indefinable way, those from whom he receives this or that; by whom he is ordered about; or those who are simply strangers.... This *them* is both simple and complex, but there is never any doubt about what is meant by it.... Nowhere, except among factory workers, have I heard this absolute *them*, pre-emptory, exact, and crystal clear. This usage not only differentiates industrial workers from others; even within the factory it traces a subtle demarcation line between the majority and those whose posts or qualifications are such that they lose sight of the distance that divides the common destiny: dropping *them* is the first sign that someone really wants to start climbing the ladder."[14] "In our society," says Rudolf Bahro about East Germany, "the real line of division within the factory runs between the scientist and engineer on the one hand and the machine operator on the other — a line sharper than that between foreman and worker."[15]

The nature of the working class is closely related to the nature of working-class grievance. When Soviet workers brave certain repression to go out on strike, they strike on wage issues. When Polish workers criticize work conditions, they do so out of concern for raising their productivity and thus their incomes.[16] To dismiss such protests as economistic, as Lane and O'Dell do (p. 48) is to ignore the political context of wage labor in a socialist state. While wage differentials are, indeed, low, the setting of wages, the nature of wages, and the intentions behind the wage system play a significant role in differentiating the working class from other social classes. They illustrate the difference between working *for* the state, as workers do, and working *in* the state, as a political or economic official. Essentially, workers are paid to produce while executives are paid to fulfill political directives. Although bonuses are automatically built into elite salaries regardless of performance, workers must earn bonuses by trying to over-fulfill their norms in rather primitive conditions. Because

14. Haraszti, *Piece Rates*, pp. 71ff.

15. Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*, trans. David Fernbach (London, 1978), p. 168. Yet this hardly resolves the question of whether there is a "new working class" in Soviet-style factories. Vadim Bielotskerkovsky argues that there is, for reasons similar to Mallet's, in "La Situation des Ouvriers et des Ingénieurs en URSS et ses Aspects Socio-politiques," in *Syndicalisme et Libertés en Union Soviétique*, ed. Olga Semyonova and Victor Haynes (Paris, 1979), pp. 179-180. But Zygmunt Bauman describes young engineers and technicians who have been employed in the same enterprise for three to five years as having a self-concept of organizational militants, in "Social Structure of the Party Organization of Industrial Workers," *Polish Sociological Bulletin*, 3-4 (1962), p. 51.

16. *Syndicalisme et Libertés*, pp. 120ff., 174; M. Holubenko, "The Soviet Working Class," *Critique*, 4 (1975); Hedrick Smith, *The Russians* (New York, 1977), pp. 297-298; Alexander Matejko, "Some Sociological Problems of Socialist Factories," in *The Social Structure of Eastern Europe*, ed. Bernard Lewis Faber (New York, 1976), pp. 382-383.

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these bonuses are conditional, workers also run the risk of not getting paid a promised reward (probably because of enterprise illiquidity) and of contributing, through their achievement, to the raising of future norms. Moreover, in a socialist economy like the Soviet one, money wages may have a contradictory relation to the standard of living. For economic and political executives, money wages may not be so significant for maintaining their standard of living as perquisites, transfer payments, and indirect state subsidies. So, curiously, the major benefit of working in the socialist state may be payment in kind. While the rewards of political and economic managers permit them to circumvent the limited (legal) and parallel (semi-legal and illegal) markets through which goods and services are sold, workers who have no access to these benefits must rely solely on money wages and other money payments (e.g., pensions and child allowances) to support their competition in those markets.[17]

It appears that workers in Soviet-style economies depend *increasingly* on fulfilling (and over-fulfilling) their norms for maintaining their income level. This relation has been strengthened by wage reforms in the Soviet Union[18] and enterprise self-financing reforms in Hungary (i.e., the New Economic Mechanism) over the last ten years. That contrasts with the *decreasing* significance that making the norm assumes in monopoly capitalism.[19] The increasing significance of bonuses in determining total earnings must affect Soviet workers' work strategies. However, their choice of strategy, of making out or looting, is also conditioned by the way that management calculates the norm in relation to the worker's expenditure of effort. In the Hungarian machine shop where Haraszti worked, as well as in some Soviet factories, the norms seem to be set so high that it is practically impossible to reach a "normal" or hypothetically maximum, rate of payment at 100 percent of the norm. This situation led Haraszti's co-workers to looting, or making the norm by any means. But in the American machine shop where Michael Burawoy worked, norms are set (and workers' strategies of making out are developed) with the expectation that production will average between 125 and 140 percent of the norm. If Burawoy is correct in viewing this response to a particular aspect of the production process as vital to "manufacturing consent," then there are grounds for thinking that the normal operations of the Soviet-style factory produce grievance.

Yet this grievance cannot be expressed in channels within the factory. Because the central political organs set both the price of labor and the price of goods, workers' protests over wages and prices turn outward, toward the state itself. To the extent that such protests constitute the type of "bargaining" in which workers can collectively engage, the workers must make their negotiations, like their accommodation, with the state.[20] This process of displacing conflicts from the factory to the local state offices has contradictory effects on the relation between the "internal state" of the factory (see Burawoy) and the socialist state as a whole. First, while the irrelevance of the factory and of factory management in bargaining serves to insulate relations within the factory from the "politics" of bargaining, these work relations are already, inherently,

17. See my "The Problem of Social Class under Socialism," *Theory and Society* (1978), pp. 403-411; on the low level of workers' money wages and benefits, see McAuley, *Economic Welfare*.

18. Janet G. Chapman, "Recent Trends in the Soviet Industrial Wage Structure," in Kahan and Ruble, *Industrial Labor*, pp. 163-164.

19. In the interpretation of Michael Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Monopoly Capitalism* (Chicago, 1979).

20. Cf. Zygmunt Bauman, "Social Dissent in the East European Political System," in *Social Structure*, p. 127.

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politicized. Moreover, the "apolitical" factory appears neither strengthened nor weakened by the protest-bargaining process, but the displacement of conflict to the state makes the state vulnerable to both continual protests and continual demands about wages and prices. Curiously, this makes the state's top personnel — the elite that are responsible for "bargaining" with (and often repressing workers — *necessary* as an institution. Of course, the depth and extent of workers' protests may make individual members of this elite expendable. Finally, the state's ability, through a combination of coercion and concession, to conduct bilateral negotiations with workers and other social groups prevents groups with different demands and different patterns of protest from joining forces.

Nevertheless, the politicization of wage labor in the socialist states does not imply political — and still less revolutionary — demands. The two themes that appear in both worker and intellectual protests, as well as in individual complaints, in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, concern a disgust with the state's hypocrisy and an appeal to the state's legality.[21] If, as Barrington Moore has recently suggested,[22] a sense of moral outrage lies at the base of working-class politics, then this sort of grievance is political. But it is far from demanding the transfer of state power to the workers or their soviets. Perhaps the most serious indictment against the socialist state that workers, by their own experience, are capable of making, is that the state's organization of production makes it impossible for them to function *as workers*. "There's another category of workers, who, in my opinion, make up the spinal column of the working class in all countries and in Russia, too. It's those men who take their work seriously, who refuse to work by being 'pushed around.' It's their psychological make-up, they can't help putting their all into their work. These people are unhappy with the system."[23] Or as 35 workers affiliated with the Independent Workers' Union of the USSR wrote in 1977, "We are honest and have principles.... We protested against the habitual tippling, the inflation of results, the theft of socialist property, the cover-ups of work accidents and other abuses by the directors of the enterprises where we were *working*" (italics theirs).[24]

Even so, such protests are rare. Public manifestations of worker grievance have to run a double gauntlet of police repression and lack of support among other workers. Nor have there been common grounds — except in the Workers' Defense Committee in Poland after 1976 — for workers and intellectuals to join in either "bargaining" with or protesting against the state. Although "the alternative" proposed by Bahro and other dissident socialist intellectuals envisions that workers can be freed *from* work, workers may want merely to be freed *for* work. (A comparison of Bahro's platform with that of the Soviet independent trade union is most suggestive.)

These considerations imply that the analysis of the working class in the socialist states is more complicated than either philosophers or functionalists have grasped. The history of the working class under socialism remains to be written.

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21. See *Syndicalisme et Libertés*, pp. 26ff., for example. To some degree, the emphasis on legality has to do with the development of the idea of legality in the state itself.
22. In *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt* (White Plains, N.Y., 1978).
23. Interview with Valentin Ivanov, in *Syndicalisme et Libertés*, p. 189.
24. *Syndicalisme et Libertés*, p. 34.

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Terry Eagleton. *Marxism and Literary Criticism.* University of California Press: Berkeley, 1976. 87 pages.

In the steel industry, the abstraction of labor was perfected through labor's "simplification." This was brought about by the intensive development and installation of a particular type of technology that organized work according to its own requirements. Although the introduction of this technology was legitimated in terms of the demands of productivity, it served primarily as a tactic against the early union movement rather than to increase production. The simpler the work, the more it was arranged in advance by technological requirements, the more dispensable were the worker's skills. This meant a greater interchangeability of workers with the result that union organizing became increasingly vulnerable to the labor reserve that could be called in to undermine strikes.

Simplification has had a similar role in the history of intellectual work. As an ideal drawing on the entirely un-self-evident notion that the complex must be approached through the simple, it has not just served the demands of scientific productivity for the streamlining of terminology and the organization of a certain type of proof. In those works in which the power of simplification has been expanded beyond this range of necessity it has also often served to legitimate the covert exclusion of the subject. The apparent concern for comprehension in simplified works, which gives the reader a sense of centrality, amounts to the intensity of the demands of the ideological apparatus to be completed at central points by living labor.

The concern for comprehension, then, is here a specification for interchangeable readers. If the reading is to result in the reproduction of the conclusions that the work has determined in advance, then the reader must possess no other characteristic than the capacity to exert a certain amount of abstract mental labor and a reluctance to question the necessity of the organization of work. Given this, the reading should produce, along with the specified conclusions, a surplus value: this is the sum of delusion produced, of heteronomy in the disguise of autonomy, of whose precise amount the reader remains unaware. As ever, it is a question whether this surplus finally does anyone any good.

*Marxism and Literary Criticism* is a simplified introduction to Marxist theories of literature. It has become a popular text book in freshman and sophomore literature courses at American universites. According to Eagleton, "The danger with books of this kind is that they risk boring those already familiar with the subject and puzzling those for whom it is entirely new" (p. vi). That is not the real danger. Rather, the danger is that students might find nothing puzzling in it at all. The parts of a puzzle demand thoughts organizing attention; Eagleton has gone to some lengths to make such thought dispensable.

For instance, if a distortion is useful to provide a warmer view of Marxist criticism, Eagleton is prepared to claim that, "In his early essay, *The Evolution of Modern Drama* (1909), the Hungarian Marxist critic Georg Lukacs writes that 'a truly social element in literature is the form.' This is not the kind of comment which has come to be expected of Marxist criticism." Eagleton knows perfectly well that Lukacs was not at that point a Marxist. He even notes it six pages later. There Lukacs is no longer needed to soften Marxist stereotypes and Eagleton is eager to get rid of him. But at the same time, he tips his own hand: "In his early, pre-Marxist work, *The Theory of the Novel* (1920), Lukacs follows Hegel" (p. 27). Clearly, 1909 comes before 1920. Or again, if it serves agitational simplicity in analyzing literature as ideology to claim that

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the "function of ideology is to legitimate the power of the ruling class in society: in the last analysis, the dominant ideas of a society are the ideas of its ruling class" (p. 5) — a simplification that has taken plenty of people years to recover from — then a footnote in the back of the book can be relied on to take up the slack in thought: "This, inevitably, is a considerably oversimplified account" (p. 78). To what inevitability is he deferring?

The same bad faith rules the preface, which begins by posing the problem of how an introduction to Marxist criticism should be written. "The most valuable way of discussing Marxist criticism. . . would be a historical survey of it from Marx and Engels to the present day, charting the ways in which that criticism changes as the history in which it is rooted changes" (p. viii). Eagleton is emphatic about this criterion. "To give an account of a Marxist critic like, say, Georg Lukacs, without examining the historical factors which shape his criticism is clearly inadequate" (p. viii). But although this book claims to know what is needed it does not go that route. Why not? "[I]t would be impossible in this short study to do more than broach a few basic questions." But, why then is the book so short? "The book is as short as it is, incidentally, because it was originally designed for a series of brief introductory studies" (p. vi). Evidently, it was impossible for this book to be written as an adequate historical introduction to Marxist criticism because it was designed not to be.

Even the claim to an interest in history has to be questioned. It is hard to believe that anyone who writes, for example, that "criticism changes as the history in which it is rooted changes" would teach much about it. The metaphor, which is to establish an essential relation through its organic character, rejects history on the same basis: if criticism is rooted in history, then it blossoms in some other sphere external to history. Similarly, Eagleton writes elsewhere, books are the products of history. To impress us with this relation he paraphrases Matisse's line that all art "bears the imprint of its historical epoch. . . . Great art is that in which this imprint is most deeply marked" (p. 3). History, then, travels like a chicken that lays eggs, on the best of which it steps as it gets ready to move along. Which may be true, but not in the way that either Eagleton or Matisse might have meant it.

In any case, supposedly valuing a historical presentation, he rejects it because of the limited space he gives himself, and goes on to criticize the sociology of literature for "raiding literary works to abstract from them themes of interest to social historians" (p. 2). It renders "a suitably tamed, degutted version of Marxist criticism, appropriate for Western consumption" (p. 3). Railing at the academic, he nevertheless makes what he claims to reject into his model. In this book he "raids" Marxian criticism to abstract themes that are to interest literature students. These themes he organizes a-historically under four headings: literature and history; form and content; the writer and commitment; and the author as producer.

Not only is this plan academic in the sense that it holds the materials to be summarizable, but so is the language in which the plan is realized. It stretches from feigned academic heroism, "the task of the critic" (p. 78) and "if I may risk a more adventurous example," to school-marm exhortations and italicized emphases, "In saying *more* about the work, it succeeds in saying *less*" (p. 78), to pseudo-effusiveness of "chilling narratives" (p. 38), "notorious questions" and "rich passages" (p. 28) aimed at bored students; to lines of horror that things occur that are beneath the professor's dignity, "sordidly unheroic task" (p. 30), "the sordid prose of bourgeois life" (p. 45), and "scandalous propositions." Even when he is warning us that "there is nothing academic" about Marxism, he draws on an authoritarian phrasing preferred by principals. Similarly, citing lines from Plekhanov and Trotsky to carry the most

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usual sort of thought, he insists on authority rather than on a depth of argument, and encourages students to resist their own reason: "there is no such thing, Plekhanov comments, as a work of art entirely devoid of ideological content" (p. 17), or "Art needs comfort, even abundance" as Trotsky declares (p. 73).

Part 1, "Literature and Society" (pp. 1-19) begins with the usual quotes from the *German Ideology* and the *Critique of Political Economy*. Society has an economic base and an ideological superstructure. Art and aesthetic ideas are part of the latter whose function "is to legitimate the power of the ruling class." Since "in the last analysis, the dominant ideas of a society are the ideas of its ruling class," the job of the Marxist critic is to come up with this last analysis by giving the "fullest possible explanation" of the art work's ideological construction. We are assured that this is not vulgar Marxism because ideology is not being taken as the simple reflection of the ruling class's ideas. For example, a vulgar Marxist would want to show that "The Waste Land" is directly determined by ideological and economic factors; the poem's spiritual emptiness would represent the exhaustion of bourgeois ideology which in turn springs from the crisis of the English imperialist economy.

According to Eagleton, the problem is much more complex and demands a more sophisticated approach. The vulgar Marxist has not taken into account a series of "levels" that mediate between the poem and capitalist economy. Eagleton lists these levels as a series of aspects of the work that an analysis would have to include: Eliot's social situation; the ideology's more general forms, structures, content and complexity; why Eliot, though conservative, was part of the avant garde; why social conditions gave rise to a certain form of spirituality; Eliot's social position as an artist; modes of publication and distribution at his disposal; the relation of the poem to aesthetic theories associated with it; and other factors. All of these factors have a relative independence, their own distance from the economic base, and their own rate of development and complexity. At their conjuncture exists the poem "which we know as the Waste Land."

This is a long list. But it may not be much of an improvement on vulgar Marxism, which was at least able to keep the adrenaline high by changing metaphors directly into cognition. For Eagleton the poem is the dark spot on the graph paper, gratuitiously called unique, where all the factors listed above cross. But, in spite of the complexity of the analytical demands, that does not keep him from summarizing, evidently after all of the factors have been added up and subtracted, that "The Waste Land" is justified. How can the poem compete with the wisdom of the lessons with which Eagleton wants to impress us here: i.e., that the false is not true? To make this point he prefers a simplifying misreading of the poem as showing a man doing this or that. There is no question that Eagleton, an extremely sophisticated reader when it suits him, believes this. That such a simplification will undoubtedly help make the poem inaccessible to students must add to the intensity of the heroism of sacrificing the truth for truth's sake.

Although Eagleton lets "The Waste Land" drop at that, he does take up the problem of the value of art from several perspectives. He approves of Marx's answer in the *Grundrisse* to the question of the enduring value of Greek art. Greek art continues to give aesthetic pleasure because Greece was "the historic childhood of humanity" when there existed a harmony between nature and society. This childhood harmony, apparent in their arts, "exercises an eternal charm." It is too bad that Eagleton does not analyze the meaning of this charm for Marx. Sartre gives a clue to it in *Search for a Method* in noting that Marx overlooked the reality of the individual's childhood in his analysis of class structure. This blind spot for the individual's childhood is the

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inverse of an appreciation for humanity's childhood. Admiration for the latter, which never existed anymore than harmony between society and nature, not any more than the Erinnyes were fictional, is a tactic for repressing the former. It is the same tactic that precludes any admirer of the Portuguese socialist poster of the boy standing next to a rifle with a rose in the barrel held out by a soldier from recognizing the rose's significance: it is the flower of infantile amnesia. The question of that poster is whether the flower can be plucked, like defusing a bomb, without causing a disaster. Only in that instant would reconciliation of some sort between nature and society be conceivable. Eagleton steps in, however, on the admiring side and predicts disaster in encouraging terms: "socialist society can reproduce at an incomparably higher level" that primitive image of harmony (p. 13).

Later in the book Eagleton develops a similarly hollow description of the value of art, this time in arguing against the Lukacs of the *Historical Novel.* Eagleton takes issue with the following line from Lukacs, "It does not matter whether Scott or Manzoni were aesthetically superior to, say, Heinrich Mann, or at least this is not the main point. What is important is that...[they] were able to portray popular life in a more profound, authentic, human and conretely historical fashion than even the most outstanding writers of our day" (p. 56). Believing that he is defending the aesthetic from Lukacs, who "like several Marxist critics, is unconsciously surrendering to one bourgeois notion of the aesthetic as a mere secondary matter of style and technique," Eagleton demands, "What does 'aesthetically superior' mean, if not such things as 'more profound, authentic, human and concretely historical'?" Evidently, struck by the question and implicitly suspicious of whether aesthetic does mean that, he continues in parentheses, "(I leave aside the notable vagueness of these terms)." What does this come to? Lukacs was obviously writing in a bourgeois trance when he valued the aesthetic second to something else. In contrast, Eagleton is presumably clear-headed as he claims to value the aesthetic essentially and as a primary value by simply identifying it with Lukacs' primary values which he goes on to describe as notably vague and whose meaning he is not in the rest of the book in the slightest concerned to clarify.

A third, though implicit attempt at valuing the aesthetic, the one in which Eagleton is himself most directly interested and has developed at length in *Criticsm and Ideology,* is derived from Althusser. Eagleton begins to summarize this view at the end of Part 1, and completes it in Part 2, "Form and Content" (pp. 20-36), a section otherwise given over to summaries of Lukacs and Goldmann. According to Althusser in *Lenin and Philosophy,* art is both within and distances itself from ideology. It is an ideological representation that allows the reader to perceive the ideology on which it is based. Since the reader perceives ideology as ideology, rather than just participating in the illusory world of experience which, according to Althusser, is ideology, the reader is moved in the direction of the full knowledge of ideology which is science (p. 18). Pierre Macherey, one of Althusser's collaborators in *Reading Capital,* who is Eagleton's most direct model, has expanded Althusser's analysis of literature in *Pour une Théorie de la Production Littéraire.* This is a 320-page book of which more than half is overlapping, almost lyrical methodological pronouncements. In his summaries of Macherey, which are arranged as the high points of the book's first half, Eagleton does not present any of Macherey's own analysis, though he does repeat some of the methodological comments. Macherey as a result remains obscure, yet central to the book. Since Macherey is certainly interesting, but is not available in English, it might be most useful to summarize his work from the perspective of one of his own analyses, rather than repeating Eagleton's summary.

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Whereas for Althusser just reading a book will at least get you on the road to science, according to Macherey, if we go by his book's longest analysis, only scientific criticism can sort it out. A fictional work is written with regard to ideology. Jules Verne's novels are written in relation to the plans of bourgeois ideology for scientifically conquering nature. To represent this project requires the collection of a group of signs that will embody it as the work's textual content. These signs are then organized into themes that amount to the story line. Macherey thinks that, in the process of thematization, a story emerges that conflicts with the ideological project. In *Journey to the Center of the Earth,* the project of scientifically conquering nature, going to the Earth's center, unrolls only through the deciphering of a variety of tracks and messages left behind by past explorers. The project, then, can only be continued in so far as it is also a journey into the past. This amounts to a conflict and multiplicity of meanings, that of the project's level and that of the story level. Macherey wants to figure out the principle of this conflict and multiplicity of meanings. The principle that is to be discovered is the origins of the work's production, or, as he also calls it, the silence in regard to which the work is written and which the work is forbidden to say. The principle that he discovers for Verne's novel is located in the limitations of bourgeois ideology. Since the Third Republic's bourgeoisie had its revolution behind itself, it was prevented from imagining the future, which it planned to achieve through the scientific conquering of nature, except within the framework of the past (i.e., the tracks that Verne's scientists were obliged to follow). Hence any attempt to represent the achievement of the future resulted in a representation of regression.

Macherey has developed this theory of literary production, in part, in opposition to theories of immanent criticism. The latter suffer the empiricist fallacy that the novel, for example, has an essential meaning existing within it that must be uncovered through *interpretation.* According to Macherey, art work contains no essential meaning. Rather, as seen above, there are conflicting meanings whose origin lies outside of the novel and which can only be determined through the work's scientific *explanation.*

It is not only philosophers and literary critics who are likely to develop grudges against interpretation. Georges Marchais, the general secretary of the French Communist Party, to which both Macherey and Althusser belong, was recently (January 1980) on a television show, "Cartes sur Table," to answer questions about his party's support of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He vaguely explained that the invasion served the Afghanis' desire for peace and opposed the imperialist plots of the Americans, Chinese, and Pakistanis. Righteously becoming accusatory, he sought to turn the table on the journalists interviewing him and demanded to know why American imperialism's hand in South America goes unnoticed. Marchais was excited and, suddenly confusing continents, said point blank that "The imperialist invasion of Afghanistan. . . I mean, of South America. . ." Is it just continents that were confused? The journalists were stunned but they did not dare stop him. If they had, Marchais' response to such interference is well documented. He would have accused them of using bourgeois artifice to mislead the honest and good-willed working class.

Like Macherey, Eagleton would agree. What the voice of explanation says is the final consciously determined content, not what is expressed. But whereas Marchais limits discussion on this point with the authority of the vanguard party, Eagleton has a scientific opinion about it. As he puts it, paraphrasing Macherey, "The aim of Marxist criticism" is not to interpret but "to explain the literary work more fully. . . . Interpretation of a text means revising or correcting it in accordance with some ideal

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norm of what it should be; it consists...in refusing *the text as it is*. Interpretative criticism merely redoubles the text, modifying and elaborating it for easier consumption. In saying *more* about the work, it succeeds in saying *less*" (p. 78).

This is a constricted view of interpretation. Paradoxically, it is only interpretation, whose single methodological allegiance is to the thought that what is said is different from what is meant and whose intention is therefore to overrule authoritarian limits to concepts and comprehension, that can show this view to be constricted. This can be done by showing that the agnosticism that Eagleton has crammed into "some" in "some ideal norm," which is meant to call in the reader on the side of common sense and support Eagleton's claims to hands-off objectivity, expresses an ideal. Eagleton begins above by positing a monolithic, "Marxist criticism" which he limits to explanation. Interpretation is limited to "redoubling" the text. If it is objected that there are plenty of people working from an interpretive model who would call themselves Marxists, then one of those impossible ideal norms might be pressed to the surface and Eagleton's scientism would show itself to be an old-fashioned mean streak: "Then they are not scientists!" Or, as he puts it himself, concisely in a footnote, "revolutionary (i.e., scientific)" (p. 83).

The rule of the explanation of literature places literature at an absolute distance from experience. This disqualifies the qualitative moment of the individual's response which is the only basis on which what is said may be distinguished from what is meant. Without this qualitative element interpretation would shrink to repetition and the perception of literature to an entirely quantitative summary of the results (as in Eagleton's earlier mentioned analysis of "The Waste Land"). Explanation separated from interpretation permits the establishment of an authoritarian circle around those who are doing the explaining and allows the arbitrary limitation of concepts at any point — whether it is during Marchais' explanation of Afghanistan or Macherey's of Verne. A good scientist should not question what is meant.

If Eagleton's science were ideology, he would be obliged to turn his machinery on himself. Macherey's analysis of Verne's regressive future would be significant for Eagleton's sympathy for Marx's analysis of the value of Greek art. Likewise, his summary of Macherey's notion that "the text is...ideologically forbidden to say certain things.... [I]n trying to tell the truth in his own way, for example, the author finds himself forced to reveal the limits of the ideology in which he writes" (p. 35) would also have consequences for his own analysis. This would be particularly true for Part 3, "The Writer and Commitment" (pp. 37-58). In this section Eagleton wants to correct the "layman's image" that "Marxist criticism...calls on the writer to commit his art to the cause of the proletariat." That notion is the result of the failure of the Bolshevik revolution under Stalin and the development of the repressive Proletkult that was finally consolidated by the Soviet Writers Union. Lenin is quoted to prove that Stalinism was a non-representative distortion of the revolution. Eagleton fortunately or unfortunately picks funny evidence. "Literature must become a cog and a screw of one single social democratic machine." There is no neutrality in writing: "the freedom of the bourgeois writer is only masked dependence on the money bag!.... Down with non-partisan writers!" But although some might react hysterically here to the cog and the screw and be unable to imagine that democracy would be anything comparable to a single social democratic machine or even see how Lenin's denunciation of non-partisan writers is so far from what developed later in the Soviet Writers Union, Eagleton knows how to restore order. Lenin's remarks, he says, were only intended to apply to *party* literature. Outside of party literature Lenin remained open handed. That's a relief. Likewise, Trotsky is on Lenin's side against the

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Proletkult. He also was open to non-Marxist post-revolutionary art. Though this does not mean that he was for "eclectically tolerating counter-revolutionary works." A vigilant revolutionary censorship would be a necessary part of his "flexible" policy in the arts.

This is not a very convincing argument against Marxism's bad reputation. The evidence is ground for a solid conviction. It looks like that is what Eagleton virtually set out to do, although he certainly intended the opposite. The rest of the chapter, though concerned in large part with a presentation of Marx and Engels' actually non-repressive view of art, is not enough to keep Eagleton from insisting on repression, though he leads up to it and even states it in a liberal manner.

After the discussion of Marx and Engels, he returns to specifically criticize Lukacs' reflection theory and version of commitment. The result is an apparent rejection of the notions of political correctness and progressiveness as a basis of Marxist criticism. In toying with rejecting the latter, Eagleton oversteps his own flexibility. "To suggest that the question 'Is the work politically progressive?' will not do as the basis of a Marxist criticism is by no means to dismiss...partisan literature as marginal" (p. 57;. At this point Macherey's model for analyzing literature is needed; there is a real break in the argument. A sort of Prague Spring occurs on a very polite level. Trotsky's earlier proudly quoted, "We Marxists have always lived in tradition" (p. 42) is prescient. The language becomes biblical, "The Soviet Futurists and Constructivists who went out into the factories" and the argument begins to run in reverse. Though he had just been arguing against the limitations of "progressivism" as a basis for valuing and determining literature, he is now obliged to recant. "Moreover, it *is* true that all major art is 'progressive' in the limited sense that any art sealed from the significant movements of its epoch...relegates itself to minor status." The argument also becomes non-sequential and self-contradictory, making it hard to see what he believes of what he is writing. He adds a sentence later, "It should be added, too, that the question of how 'progressive' art needs to be to be valid is a *historical* question, not one to be settled dogmatically for all time." It would not be useful to try to untangle what it means to say that all major art is progressive because it is historical, though just how progressive it must be is to be answered historically. But the confusion does make a sort of sense when it is seen what he is trying to get to. He continues: there are periods when art does not have to be progressive or committed to be major art. But, then again, there are periods when art becomes "trivial and emasculated.... In such an era, the need for explicitly revolutionary art again becomes pressing." And what sort of period are we in? All those readers trapped by the "layman's" image of Marxist criticism that demands commitment to the proletariat suffer the fewest surprises: "It is a question to be seriously considered whether we are not ourselves living in such a time." There is, however, a small reversal. Whereas for Stalin art should make the proletariat great, here art is to commit itself to make art great. That is in any case the logical conclusion, though that is obviously not what he means. But what is the meaning of a Marxist who in the next chapter argues in favor of the 'de-centering' of the subject — against the dominating ideology of the "creative author" — who is here basing his argument for progressivism, as he writes above, on a concern for literature's masculinity?

According to Eagleton, "a simple fact which is obvious to everyone" is that literature is an industry; the writer is a producer. This introduces Part 4, "The Author as Producer" (pp. 59-76) and a summary discussion of Benjamin's two most famous essays: "The Author as Producer" and "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." The former amounts to the argument that art has its own productive

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forces which involve and determine a set of relations between the artist and the audience. These forces of production must be revolutionized to produce new relations between the artist and audience that will change spectator into collaborators. The latter essay explains how shock experience and reproduction techniques destroy the aura of art, demystifying the work and changing beholders into critics. Film, the least auratic of the arts, makes everyone into an expert.

If Benjamin's radical intention in these essays was to describe a possibility for critical consciousness in the historical collapse of the aura and in revolutionizing techniques, just as in his later work the critical intention took the form of analyzing the aura's collapse as precluding experience whereby the proletariat could grasp its historical reality, that is not Eagleton's interest in presenting such a simplified view of Benjamin. Brecht's criticism of bourgeois theater, which follows on the discusison of Benjamin, gets the same sort of treatment: bourgeois theater produces "a passive consumer of a finished unchangeable art object. The play doesn't stimulate (the audience) to think constructively of *how* it is presenting its characters and events, or how they might have been different.... [T]he dramatic illusion is a single whole which conceals the fact that it is constructed, it prevents an audience from reflecting critically on both the mode of representation and the actions represented" (p. 64).

One would think that this approving, succinct summary of Brecht would get into Eagleton's machinery. Somehow, though, he holds himself immune from this criticism, whose ideal is that a work should expose rather than conceal contradiction and thereby oblige self-reflection and the transformation of reality. In exact opposition to this prescription, Eagleton's summary manner is calculated to restrict his audience's ability to judge for themselves by preventing, with few exceptions, seams from appearing in the thoughts of his heroes and himself.

But here, where he most parodies Brecht's model, looks it in the face, quotes it, and mimes its antithesis, an element of identity appears between them and the two together may be placed in one strand of history from Lessing to Lukacs to Mao: that art work (and for Eagleton, any object) should exist for its function — whether it is the purifying of the sentiments through pity and terror, producing a sense of totality critical of capitalist life, or, as for Brecht, as Eagleton quotes him, to "render reality to men in a form that they can master it" (p. 63). In any of these cases, art in itself (for Eagleton, any object in itself) should be identical to how it exists for others. More plainly, this can be taken as the opportunistic element in the claimed ideal of total functional objectivity.

This brings us back to Eagleton, who, like Brecht, thinks that "the work should not be systematically complete in itself, but like any social product should be complete only in the act of being used" (p. 70). This is essential. It penetrates to his preference for "texts" rather than "books." As he writes elsewhere, "The literary text is a text (as opposed to 'book') because it is read; with it as with any other social product, the act of consumption is itself constitutive of its existence" (cf. Eagleton's *Criticism and Ideology*, London, 1978, p. 62). This reversed Feuerbachian definition, that objects are what you eat, forgets to mention that such a definition exhausts reality. Functional integration as the determinant of form, whether of art's or art criticism, establishes the basis for an indifference to the object's content. The meaning, for instance, of the summaries that Eagleton presents is always liable to annihilation by such a form's prerogative. True to Brecht's own moral for the theater, then, Eagleton can ignore Brecht's specifications for his own presentation — just as Brecht through his own machinery for "rendering reality," justified a total indifference to economic reality in "St. Joan."

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Eagleton states this point, at which he and Brecht touch, succinctly. Brecht offers a model of revolutionary art that transforms the mode of production "rather than merely the contents" (p. 67). By focusing on transforming art's mode of production three redefinitions of art become possible: that of the nature of form, the concept of the author, and of the artistic product (p. 67). This third redefinition states that all art should, like Brecht's reveal contradictions, rather than cover them over. The first two redefinitions remain to be discussed.

The first is to be achieved by penetrating "form, the once jealously guarded secret of the aesthetes" (p. 67). Great secrets are not to be expected. Aesthetes' perceptions of form are the content of the fetishization of art, not artistic form. Liberating the secret of form from them would be like liberating the secret of mourning from professional wailers. That secret Eagleton has, anyway, already given away, i.e., that form may face its content as "merely content." But, the secret evidently bears repeating in a more elaborate fashion: the "mode" of artistic production, for example, art produced via a printing press or manuscript, determines the "productive relation" between author and audience. These relations of artistic production are internal to art, determining the form of art. Changing art's technology therefore changes form. This is a bumpy ride from the mode of production to technology. Without being able to follow it exactly, the redefinition of form that Eagleton appears to be after is that art's form is determined by its technology and a variety of other relations of its production. Add to that two other determinants mentioned earlier in the book, i.e., ideological structures and a relatively autonomous history of literary forms, and the secret of the aesthetes' notion of form has been repeated: art's form is everything but its content. In other words, art's form finds content doing just that which a summarizing style would most resent, i.e., becoming form.

That art's form is to be seen as embodying a mode of production also defines an obligation to change it from this perspective. Piscator is applauded for having done just that. He brought to bear on his dramas whole staffs of artists, historians, and economists. This not only changed the form of drama, it also had the effect of challenging the notion of the isolated individual author, a creator who suffers inspiration. This is Eagleton's second redefinition of art. Art should be seen as the work of a producer rather than creator. The result would be the demystification of art.

It is hard to see why Eagleton calls these redefinitions of art, as though they are transformations still left to be accomplished. Art's form has long been subsidiary to technological revolution. That this has been accompanied by a high degree of division of labor, like Piscator's, and that this has resulted in the destruction of the isolated creative artist is a redefinition that has been concretely agreed on. It takes a journalist a week to turn up the crowd that painted the last King Kong bill board. The group of technicians and advertising specialists backing them up and taking part in their design makes Piscator's group look self-aggrandizing. This anonymity and division of labor has not brought about the demystification of art, but, as is well known, its massification.

Eagleton's scientific perspicacity has only turned up the status quo. This is not just a function of method. It expresses the same prohibition that he levels at art out of a concern for cleanliness: art "should not be a mere breeding ground of fantasy" (p. 66). Similarly motivated in *Criticism and Ideology*, he would dispose of Raymond Williams for the perversion of getting himself mixed up in his own thoughts. Williams has "the style of a thinker intellectually isolated to the point of eccentricity" who falsely believes "that the deepest personal experience can be offered. . . as socially 'typical.' " Again, the ban on the subject, this time psychologically based, results in a commitment to the

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normatively given.

Eccentric writers and art that has resisted the culture industry are both to disappear in the following insistence on the real nature of artistic production, "the author does not make the materials with which he works: forms, values, myths, symbols, ideologies, come to him already worked upon, as the worker in a car assembly plant fashions his product from already processed materials" (p. 69). For all his talk of the immanence of the relations of production in art, the distinction that those authors that have maintained some autonomy from the culture industry do not, like auto workers, sell their labor power but their manuscripts, does not count for much. No difference greater than degree should exist between Faulkner writing and writing for *Bild Zeitung*. But, in spite of the auto factory metaphor's insistence that all work be abstract, autonomously working artists no more produce their work assembly-line style than auto workers "fashion" the cars they turn out. Not even Eagleton actually believes the latter. He threw it into the description as a sort of labor enrichment device to make the ideal of the assembly line more digestible. In a footnote, he calls on Macherey (it might as well be Skinner) to give a fuller view of just what production is, "It is not so much that the author produces his text, as that the text 'produces itself' through the author" (p. 83). To translate this back into Eagleton's metaphor, as the tour continues through the auto factory, the guide points out that it is not so much the workers who produce the cars, as the cars that produce themselves through the workers. Since this is a tour for scientists, the proper proof is given: cars appear at the far end of the assembly line.

Whereas this metaphorical extension is true as a description of the abstraction of a certain type of labor, Macherey's and Eagleton's scientific analysis of the nature of literary production is false, although the nature of literary production as they describe it here is undoubtedly the industrial process raised to an ideal. It is a question how their analysis would locate pain. Evidently it would not be so much the worker who feels pain as pain that feels itself through the worker. Or, would pain be merely content? It is also a question how it happened that the industrially fragmented, negligible subject, the life that Marxism meant to overcome, is idealized here and given preference as a norm over those activities that are not yet entirely submerged in mass industry. Is it just the result of such a reflex that changes that to which one has lost into one's ideal? The disdain for the 'creative' author is of a piece with the insistence that all objects exist through their consumption. Anything that does not have teeth marks in it is rejected as a delusion. With this in mind, Eagleton's fear that interpretation will make objects more easily consumable takes on a different meaning. Is it the fear that the students who are, ideally, to work abstractly through this book, screwing together the argument's prefabricated pieces, won't swallow it?

*Robert Kentor*

Nancy Chodorow. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1978. 263 pages. $12.95 cloth; $4.95 paper.

Politics and knowledge interact in complex and sometimes hidden ways. A recent dramatic instance of this is the way in which the women's movement has compelled a

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re-examination of some of the most widely held assumptions of social science. In this context, Chodorow's book, *The Reproduction of Mothering*, stands out as an impressive theoretical initiative. It gives us a new way of understanding women's mothering as fundamental to the sexual division of labor and gender inequality. By exposing the socially constructed nature of what has often been dismissed as a biologically based species universal, this book points toward its social transformation. *The Reproduction of Mothering* also explores the implications of women's primary role in childcare for the psychological development of sons and daughters. This not only illuminates the generational reproduction of women as mothers, but also provides the first psychoanalytic explanation of feminine development that is neither androcentric nor simplistically biologistic. By rethinking the nature of mothering, Chodorow's book reveals human nature itself as a self-transformative process.

Chodorow's retelling of the Freudian "story" is both critique and reclamation. She lays bare the normative assumptions in traditional psychoanalysis that underline the biological and functional determinism in discussions of women's developmental "tasks," and the differential valuation of male and female genitalia and character formations. Concomitantly, her analysis focuses attention on aspects of both female and male development that have largely remained unelaborated. Moreover, where traditional views have conceived of the two genders in essence as masculinity and its lack, or reaction to its lack, this reformulation sees two distinct "presences."

Stylistically, as well, this book marks a departure. More than other theorists, Chodorow invites participation in the construction of her argument, explaining why she has chosen a particular psychoanalytic account of infancy, what the strong and weak points of certain kinds of evidence are, and so on. Unlike either popular books about similar issues — usually experiential monologues whose prescriptions are the more powerful because they are couched as self-exposure — or traditionally opaque theoretical discourse, this mode of presentation makes the process of theoretical work transparent and its dialogue with the audience explicit. In form as well as substance, this book demands an appreciation of the ways in which our knowledge and our reality are constructed through social relationships.

Chodorow's discussion of mothering is tripartite. First, she must establish the validity of asking the book's central question: why is it that *women* mother? To do so, she demonstrates first that women's mothering is systematically linked to gender inequality, and second that women's childcare (separated analytically from childbearing and lactation) is not sufficiently accounted for by either biology or cognitive role learning. This inaugurates the second part of the book; she turns to psychoanalysis for an understanding of how mothering (and the relative uninvolvement of fathers in parenting) produces different orientations to and capacities for parenting in daughters and sons. In the final section, she shows how the personalities of men and women who grow up in families with asymmetrical parenting "fit" the sexual division of labor as it is institutionalized in our economy and society, and how the psychic patterns men and women have absorbed in the course of development work toward the reproduction of another generation of mothers.

The fact that women, rather than men, are the principal caretakers of children in every known society is a cultural universal long noted by social observers. However, the transformation of that fact into a theoretical question has been dependent on a series of social and intellectual developments. Only recently, for example, have the implications of women's mothering for the social position of women been accorded serious attention. A new generation of feminist scholars, among them Ortner, Rosaldo, and Chodorow herself in other writing, have shown that women's mothering

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is central to a sexual division of labor that, by confining women to the domestic sphere, helps constitute a system of gender inequality. Men also participate in domestic groups, but more than women they participate in extra-domestic networks — forms of non-familial association. While women's social relationships tend to be inter-generational and particularistic — and tend to be seen as "natural" — men's social relationships link them to men in more explicitly elaborated intragenerational groups and hierarchies. This "public sphere" is the locus of social, cultural, and political institutions. It is male dominated, and hence both society and culture are in a sense masculine realms. Moreover, except in hunting and gathering bands where there is little differentiation between these two spheres, it is within the public sphere that formal social controls are created and enforced, including the rules that govern the "sex-gender system" of kinship and marriage. As Chodorow says, "Culturally and politically, the public sphere dominates the domestic, and hence men dominate women" (p. 10).[1]

Given Chodorow's conceptualization of women's mothering as the linchpin of structural gender inequality, the question of why women care for children assumes theoretical importance. Her discussion of the public and private spheres also illuminates why social theorists have accorded so little attention to the reproduction of mothering: they, like most members of society, have given almost exclusive attention to the extra-domestic social system, and have seen women's location in the family as a natural and theoretically uninteresting fact.

In fact, as Chodorow points out, although women's mothering has persisted over time, the domestic sphere and therefore women's social relationships and the form and content of mothering have changed drastically. As market relations and rationalized bureaucracies have spread, the importance of kinship has declined and the family (and women's work within it) has lost many of its productive, educational, social-welfare, and religious functions. Mothering has become more isolated and exclusive, less "embedded in a range of other activities and human relations" (p. 6). At the same time, with the drop in fertility and mortality rates, the rise in longevity, and the increasing separation of sex from reproduction, child-rearing has come to occupy less of women's lifespans. Yet, paradoxically, women's emotional and psychological role within the family has taken on more ideological importance during this same period.

Women's mothering also has a relational quality at odds with much of social life. At a time when many social and occupational roles are achieved, specialized and contractual, mothering remains diffuse, particularistic, ascribed — "precapitalist," as Marxist-feminists characterize it. Moreover, many of the functional bases of the sexual division of labor are now being undermined. Most work does not demand strength and physical aggressiveness, family units can be dissolved, and childbearing itself is seen as a matter of choice in a populous and consumer-oriented society. Whether parenting is denigrated or idealized, it is certainly more problematic now than ever before.

Within this context, Chodorow's critique of arguments for an instinctual or bio-evolutionary functionalist basis of women's mothering is a timely one, and illuminates the many deficiencies of psychological and anthropological research on sex differences. I think her dismissal of women's mothering as not necessarily functional

1. It should be noted that this formulation is controversial, though widely accepted. Like much thinking that draws on anthropology — and all three authors have been trained in that discipline — it tends to play down both history and systems of stratification that cut across stratification by gender. I find it, however, a useful way to conceptualize persistent commonalities in women's social position.

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for the survival of human groups beyond the hunting and gathering stage is too quick, however. Given the high rates of infant mortality and women's longer involvement in pregnancy and lactation before modern times (which provides, as she notes, a *psychological* basis for their later childcare), and also given the physical demands of work and warfare, it is at least understandable why women, rather than men, have traditionally cared for children. It is important to remember, however, that human biology is always socially mediated and more important, that many of the conditions that may have made women's mothering essential no longer obtain in modern society.

Chodorow also criticizes the recent work of revisionist social scientists who argue that women's parenting is not biologically inevitable but purely the product of role training or cognitive role learning. Like her, I think this alternative view is limited. It does not adequately account for the tenacity of certain aspects of the organization of gender, for the gratifications mothers experience, or for the corresponding discomforts we feel with new ways of patterning sexual and familial relationships despite our conscious intentions. The Freudian tradition is a useful corrective for precisely these inadequacies, since it asserts the symbolic and emotional complexity of the ways in which children internalize their relationships in the social world of the family, and the continuing unconscious power this early learning exerts over the lives of adults.[2]

So, like many feminist thinkers, Chodorow turns to Freud, drawn by the centrality of sexuality and gender in his theory and by the sophistication with which he approaches the social constitution of the self. What makes her book exceptional is not that she uses Freud, but the ways in which she is able to claim and elaborate insights from the psychoanalytic tradition by rescuing it from unexamined and ideologically loaded assumptions.

Chodorow's developmental account itself rests on certain assumptions, most obviously that women's role as mothers represents learned rather than instinctual behavior. In the summary that follows, I will first discuss the assumptions that underlie object-relations theory (a psychoanalytic perspective that emphasizes the importance of society and culture, as mediated by unconsciously internalized intimate relationships) and then point out how Chodorow's use of this perspective illuminates the reproduction of mothering.

Unlike Freud and the ego psychologists, many object-relations theorists posit a primary sociality on the part of the human infant. In other words, the infant needs human contact and human relationships in and of themselves, not just as instruments for release of tension from physiological drives. Erotic and aggressive drives, and the "zones" on which they are focused in early development, are transformed, in this view, in the course of attaining and retaining relationships, and as a result of experiences with caretakers. Thus, "all aspects of psychic structure, character, and emotional and erotic life are social" (p. 50). Even the id is seen as patterned through a "history of object-choices," since early development is conceptualized not as a biologically unfolding process whose dynamic emanates primarily from the child, but as an interactive process dependent on the social structure of the family as well as on the individual personalities of those people emotionally closest to the child.

There are several consequences of this view. One is that human nature is conceived of as less monadic and biologically determined than in the traditional account. In a sense, the need for human contact is included as a fundamental aspect of the need for

2. Of course, the problem raised by an appropriation of Freud is how to adequately account for the massive changes which have, in a sense, made this book possible.

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self-preservation, and thus the direction of causality (in Freudian theory, biological drives were seen as determining social relationships) is framed more dialectically. How and by whom a need is fulfilled is as important as its fulfillment itself. (This is implicit even in Freud's clinical evidence.) Thus, the internal conflicts, defenses and repressions that give birth to psychic differentiation emerge not just as if a need is frustrated, but also if the context of its fulfillment is conflictual.

Obviously, any reconstruction of the preverbal experience of the individual is difficult to prove. Arguments for this point of view come from re-readings of clinical evidence, from ethology, and to my mind most convincingly, from studies showing that infants raised in institutional settings where all their physical wants are fulfilled but where emotional needs for intimacy are not, become withdrawn and, in extreme cases, die. What is interesting is less whether or not the assumption of primordial sociality is true, but that it accentuates the unfixed quality of human development and the import of human relationships in determining its course. It points to the need for attention to the interpersonal context of even very early development, both in terms of the emotional experience the mother brings to her mothering, and in terms of the emotional consequences of the structural asymmetry of modern parenting (isolated and exclusive mothering, more distant fathering) for children of both sexes. Chodorow's account focuses on just these issues.

For example, since mothers have traditionally provided empathic and self-sacrificial early care, and since it is with mothers that infants feel the merging of primary identification, both girls and boys, according to Chodorow, "expect and assume women's unique capacities for sacrifice, caring and mothering, and associate women with their own fears of regression and powerlessness" (p. 83). These unconscious expectations are generalized as people grow up, when gender becomes more salient to them.

Moreover, mothering has grown more isolated in modern-day families. The constancy of early care that psychoanalysts maintain is crucial for the establishment of a stable sense of self, which was traditionally often provided by several people, has come to be the responsibility of only one person. This may make later intimacy both more intense and more ambivalent, calling forth strong fears of loss and of being overwhelmed.

Psychoanalysts focus on the quality as well as the constancy of early child care: this is what gives the child a sense of *who* it is. Chodorow's analysis is centrally concerned with demonstrating that boys and girls come away from their early experience of being cared for by women with very different senses of self — the boy as separated from the world of other people, the girl as merged with or related to it. Her contention is that these different self-concepts and "relational capacities" tend to enable women, rather than men, to find — even seek — gratification in mothering later in their lives.

In the preoedipal period, children's sense of themselves is defined mainly in relation to the mother. Clinical evidence gives indirect evidence that the mother's experience of the child differs depending on the child's sex. For example, it seems clear that mothers tend to experience daughters as *like* themselves. In normal cases, this means a prolonged preoedipal period and a continuing preoccupation with issues of individuation and merging, a less secure sense of ego boundaries for girls. All these psychological issues are reactivated by the experience of mothering, and enhance girls' capacities for being mothers themselves. In cases of difficulty — which can arise from the overinvestment in children encouraged by isolated and exclusive mothering — mothers may overidentify with their daughters, seeing them only as extensions of themselves. This creates problems of prolonged symbiosis and confusion of ego-

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boundaries.

Mothers tend to experience their sons as "other," and as male objects of their affections. Thus, sons feel more differentiated from their mothers at an early age, and generally more separated from the world. Difficulties between mothers and sons tend to occur when the mother becomes overly seductive (this is also more likely to occur in relatively father-absent families where women are the caretakers). In such cases, early developmental issues of separation and individuation become entwined with questions of masculinity and sexual identity, and it may become difficult for a boy to develop a sense of masculinity without a rigid assertion of his separateness that involves repudiation of the feminine within himself and a generalized disparagement of women.

In the oedipal period, fathers — in their relative absence as well as in the ways they do interact with children of both sexes — also become salient to the psychological development of their sons and daughters, according to Chodorow. In fact, her developmental account highlights the parental contribution of both mothers and fathers, whether in overt behavior or fantasied aggression or seduction, to the emotional coloration of the child's oedipal situation. This not only points up difficulties that may arise from the present organization of parenting, but also implicitly indicates the possibility of change in the developmental process itself, since social structural changes in the family could elicit a significantly different emotional constellation than the traditional oedipal crisis.

Under the present organization of mothering, the exclusivity and intensity of mother-son relationships help push the son into rivalry with the father rather early. The father's envy and resentment of his son may be the stronger because of his own sense of being an outsider in the family; this may account for the son's strong need to deny the preoedipal sense of connectedness in order to identify with the father, and also for a rigid masculine superego formation. Moreover, since fathers are relatively distant figures, masculinity in sons may be established less by personal identification, than through abstract processes of identification with masculine cultural stereotypes, and "the secure possession of certain realms and the insistence that these realms are superior to the maternal world of youth" (p. 182).

Chodorow's account of the girl's oedipal period also focuses on the social structure of childcare. For example, when the girl turns to the father (a turn provoked in large part by the girl's intense and ambivalent attachment to the mother) she discovers a comparatively distant love object who calls forth, according to Chodorow, a less exclusive love than that of the boy for his mother. This may make the situation less conflictual and guilty for girls, thus requiring a less complete repression of oedipal love and a less rigid superego.

Two consequences of this oedipal asymmetry for women's later parenting are particularly important. First, girls tend to oscillate between mothers and fathers as love objects. This involves them in an emotional triangle they later replicate, when married, by having a child. Second, because they have not had to repress preoedipal or oedipal involvement so completely, they continue to retain a concern with both external and internalized relationships. The oedipal triangle, the preoedipal merging with the mother, and the basic feminine sense of self-in-relationship, are all relived in the relations women have with their children. As Chodorow says: "Women develop capacities for mothering from their object-relational stance. This stance grows out of the special nature and length of their preoedipal relationship to their mother; the nonabsolute repression of oedipal relationships; and their general ongoing mother-daughter preoccupation as they are growing up. It also develops because they have not

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formed the same defenses against relationships as men" (p. 204).

Chodorow's account is remarkable in many respects. I particularly admire her ability to reconstitute a body of theory by careful attention to ideological assumptions (male is better, the modern family is universal, motherhood is natural). Interestingly, her revised developmental account illuminates precisely those areas that Freud — as a man — might have had difficulty with: the importance of the preoedipal period, paternal complicity in the oedipal situation, female development toward motherhood considered independently from women's attainment of heterosexuality, and a female developmental dynamic propelled by more than envy of the male and resignation to inferior status. This critical extension of psychoanalytic discourse was begun by Karen Horney, who brought to light the correspondence between Freud's theory of feminine development and little boys' fantasies about little girls. Chodorow has deepened that critique.

I have only two major questions about *The Reproduction of Mothering*. The first concerns clinical evidence. Chodorow, I think rightly, conceives of psychoanalysis as an interpretive venture rather than as a behavioral science. And, in using clinical evidence to extend the theoretical paradigm, her argument rests on the most empirical aspect of psychoanalysis. But such evidence is usually drawn from the therapeutic relationship, can be colored by it (studies of dreams indicate this, as do reports by women of two distinct kinds of orgasms), and is usually reported by the member of the relationship who is most heavily invested in Freudian theory. Moreover, as Chodorow notes, the population from which this evidence comes is usually Western and middle class, and often emotionally troubled. All this calls the universal validity of the developmental paradigm itself into question. Chodorow's book, concerned with explaining the reproduction of certain aspects of the sex-gender system, points toward, but does not develop, another path, one that might be especially useful in coming to grips with the massive changes in this realm our generation has witnessed. As Chodorow indicates, we need further depth-psychological understanding of people at ease with change, of people whose individual history has not held them trapped in self-perpetuating patterns, of people who have experienced their mothers as a liberating rather than a constrictive force, as well as of non-Western and non-middle class childrearing. It is my suspicion that such research would not only extend our knowledge of mothering, family structure, and their relationship to human development, but would also demand a recasting of the psychoanalytic paradigm itself. In this sense, by extending psychoanalytic discourse, Chodorow's book points towards its eventual theoretical supercession.

The second reservation is with those aspects of the book in which Chodorow, following Parsons and the Frankfurt School, describes how personalities molded in the modern family "fit" the present organization of production. I tend to agree with Chodorow that early unconscious learning, reinforced by more conscious gender role learning, perpetuates expectations on the social as well as the personal level that women's primary involvement will be with the family and men's with the world of work, thus perpetuating the public-domestic dichotomy and gender inequality. Such arguments are convincing, I think, because they remain within the "sex-gender" system and seek to elucidate the historically specific manifestations of quasi-universal, gender-related social processes and features of social reality.

In contrast, arguments that attempt to account for the smooth functioning of bureaucratic organizations (Parsons) or the rise of fascism and the success of consumerism (the Frankfurt School) by reference to features of the modern family have always seemed less than satisfactory to me, both conceptually and empirically

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Empirically, I think we need to know more than we do now about people who have not traditionally been part of the clinical evidence-gathering process, more than we may ever know about the internal life of past families of all classes, and much more about the unconscious and subtle ways in which non-familial learning processes are integrated into the personality.

This is particularly crucial given the present "balance of power" between kinship and other forms of social structure. Families are increasingly permeable and vulnerable to the outside world. The pace of social change demands lives lived out at odds with the bedrock of early personality formation. In a sense, explaining the fit of personality and society through extrapolation from the family obscures tensions and contradictions — both societal and individual — which have, among other things, enabled the women's movement to come into being.

I think it probable that the patterns established by early familial learning are particularly powerful in situations that reactivate them, whether intimate adult relationships or parent-child relationships. For precisely this reason, intervention in the social organization of parenting should be indirect as well as direct, as Chodorow advocates. Equal pay for women's work, the entrance of women into exclusively masculine occupations, and so on, may be needed to, as it were, push us into a more sexually egalitarian organization of childcare. All these issues are implicit in Chodorow's discussion, and many of them are noted as areas requiring further investigation. In illuminating the persistence and complexity of the reproduction of mothering, her book constitutes a demand for an equally sophisticated understanding of other aspects of social reproduction and change.

*Elizabeth Long*

Etienne de la Boétie. *The Politics of Obedience: The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*. Introduction by Murray N. Rothbard. Translation by Harry Kurz. Black Rose Books: Montreal, 1975.

La Boétie cannot be easily assimilated into any of the major schools of political theory, for he sought to keep off the beaten track, consciously avoiding traditional approaches to the problem of authority concerned above all with the relative value of different forms of government. He wrote from outside of power, from a perspective that questioned its very basis, thus rendering its articulation into governmental structures unnatural and its underlying domination unbearable. He searched out the roots of domination: "I should merely like to understand how it happens that so many men, so many villages, so many cities, so many nations, suffer under a single tyrant who has no other power than the power they give him; who is able to harm them only to the extent to which they have the willingness to bear with him; who could do them absolutely no injury unless they preferred to put up with him rather than contradict him. Surely a striking situation!" (p. 46).

La Boétie's *Discourse of Voluntary Servitude* asks: how is domination possible? The response is clear from the title: domination is possible because people voluntarily submit to and even desire their own servitude. But this only displaces the original question and allows it to reappear in an even more formidable guise: why should people desire their domination? Hegel's master-slave dialectic is often considered the most profound account of the origins of domination.[1] But what if the slave does not

1. G.W.F Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (New York, 1967), pp. 228-240.

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submit to the master out of cowardice or fear? After all, "if two, if three, if four do not defend themselves from the one, we might call that circumstance surprising but nonetheless conceivable.... But if a hundred, if a thousand endure the caprice of a single man, should we not rather say that they lack not the courage but the desire to rise against him?" (p. 48). How is the Hegelian relation challenged if the slave proves to be so attached to the master that his attachment threatens the slave's physical survival — the *raison d'être* of his submission, according to Hegel — so that he will even offer his own "body unto death" for his master's glory (p. 52)? It is not difficult for us to grasp the master-slave relation if the slave's condition is produced by the master through coercion, false consciousness, ideology and legitimation. But La Boétie postulates that the master-slave relation is also a product of the slave's will, that the master-slave relation is internal to the slave even before the appearance of the flesh and blood master, or, in different terms, before the emergence of an instance of power separated from and controlling civil society. "What monstrous vice then, is this...for which no term can be found vile enough, which nature herself disavows, and our tongues refuse to name" (p. 48)?

La Boétie was born in 1530 in Sarlat, a town in the Périgord region of southwestern France.[2] His father was a royal official and his mother the sister of the president of the Bordeaux *parlement*. Orphaned at the age of 10, he was reared by his uncle, who had a degree in law but followed a religious career.[3] Although numerous, the nobility of the region were relatively impoverished. Of greater significance in the social structure was the commercial bourgeoisie prospering off the trade in wines, draperies, pastels and goods from Spain. Officials for the various regional governmental institutions and the central monarchic apparatus tended to be recruited from this class, and formed in their turn a tight and cultured elite closely associated with the legal profession. Although they could purchase titles and thus create an embryonic *noblesse de la robe*, they should not be understood as a part of the feudal aristocracy. La Boétie belonged to this elite stratum detached from the bourgeoisie, and his life was structured in accord with this elite's institutional patterns.

La Boétie's early education was a private training in the classics. In 1550, he went to study law at the University of Orléans. In three years, he established such a brilliant reputation that Henry II authorized him to purchase the post of lay councillor in the Bordeaux *parlement* even before he had received his degree. After passing his exams a year later, he was formally accepted as a member of *parlement* and held this position until his death in 1563.

La Boétie led a quiet life as a member of the *parlement*. Montaigne wrote that La Boétie had a "maxim deeply imprinted on his soul: that he must religiously obey and submit to the laws under which he was born. There was never a better citizen, nor one more hostile to the commotions and revolutions of his times."[4] This is correct insofar

2. The following account draws on Paul Bonnefon, "Introduction" and "Appendices" to *Oeuvres complètes d'Estienne de la Boétie* (Bordeaux, 1892), reprinted as *Estienne de la Boétie: Sa Vie, ses Ouvrages et ses Relations avec Montaigne* (Geneva, 1970); Leon Feuguère, *Etienne de la Boétie, ami de Montaigne: Etude sur sa Vie et ses Ouvrages* (Paris, 1845); Claude Paulus, *Essai sur La Boétie* (Brussels, 1949); Maurice Rat, "La Vie et les Ouvrages de La Boétie," introducing *Le Discours de la Servitude Volontaire* (Paris, 1967); François Hincker, "Introduction" to *La Boétie: Oeuvres Politique* (Paris, 1963); Marcel Gauchet and Miguel Abensour, *Les Leçons de la Servitude et leur Destin* (Paris, 1976); and Murray N. Rothbard's introduction to the book being reviewed here.

3. La Boétie was not the child of an aristocratic family, as Rothbard has incorrectly assumed. Cf. his introduction, p. 9.

4. Michel de Montaigne, *Essays* (Middlesex, 1958), pp. 104-105.

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as La Boétie's public life is concerned. Yet, there was an undeniable divergence between the spirit and implications of *The Discourse*[5] and La Boétie's later actions and words; its radical inquiry contrasts markedly with the conservatism and even authoritarianism of his later years. La Boétie was delegated in 1560 to go to Paris in order to straighten out certain financial difficulties between the *parlement* and the

5. The exact year in which *The Discourse* was written is a matter of contention. The problem begins with Montaigne, who met La Boétie in 1558. They became close, enjoying "a friendship so complete and perfect," Montaigne wrote, "that its like has seldom been read of, and nothing comparable is to be seen among the men of our day," *ibid.*, p. 92. This friendship has become legendary, and as a consequence there is the tendency, particularly among scholarly commentaries, to reduce La Boétie to his friendship with Montaigne. Cf. Maurice Riveline, *Montaigne et l'Amitié* (Paris, 1910), pp. 40-124. In fact, Montaigne originally intended his *Essays* —begun shortly after La Boétie's death — to be a sort of mausoleum to his friend's memory, and he wished to publish *The Discourse* (which had until then circulated only in manuscript form) as the centerpiece. However, Montaigne's plans were foiled shortly after the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, when *The Discourse* was published by a group of Huguenots collectively known through their writings as "monarchomachs." "I have learned," Montaigne wrote, "that the work has in the meantime been published, and for a disreputable purpose, by men whose aim is to upset and change the form of government, without the least care whether they improve it or not. They have moreover included it among writings of their own concoction. I have therefore decided not to place it here." He continued, "and in order that its publication may not prejudice the author's memory in the eyes of those who could have no first-hand acquaintance with his opinions and actions, I would inform them that the treatise was written by him in his boyhood, and by way of exercise only, as a common theme which has been a thousand times worn threadbare in different books." Cf. Montaigne, *Essays, op.cit.*, p. 104. Heir to La Boétie's literary estate, Montaigne published his friend's *oeuvre* a short time later, including his translations of Xenophon and Plutarch and his French and Latin poetry, but excluding *The Discourse* and the "Mémoire touchant l'Edit de Janvier 1562," claiming once again that he "found them too delicate to abandon them to the gross and heavy air of such an unpleasant season." *Oeuvres complètes d'Estienne de La Boétie, op.cit.*, p. 62. Montaigne maintained that La Boétie wrote *The Discourse* in 1548 at the age of 18 in the first edition of the *Essays*, but he revised this to 16 in later editions. When faced with *The Discourse's* publication for specific and partisan political ends, Montaigne praised the work's literary merits, while seeking to mute its political resonance by emphasizing the immaturity of its author.

Other less conservative readers follow the lead of Montaigne's friend Jacques August de Thou in his *Historiarum sui temporis para 1a* and place the date of the composition of *The Discourse* in 1549, when La Boétie was 19. Although hardly more reassuring as regards his political maturity, this date suggests that the more radical tones of *The Discourse* are a response to a peasant revolt of the same year. This thesis is taken up by François Hincker and by Miguel Abensour and Marcel Gauchet, but is ignored by the more conservative writers like Paul Bonnefon and Maurice Rat. Rothbard's position seems surprising at first, given his anarchist sympathies, but this can be explained by his almost total reliance on Paul Bonnefon for all biographical matters. If one disregards Montaigne's later revisions, the date can be narrowed down to 1548-49. However, this is belied by a careful scrutiny of *The Discourse*, for it contains a reference to the poets of the Pleiade (Ronsard, Dorat and du Bellay), whose writings only came to be known in the early 1550s, as well as a reference to Longa, a figure in the Bordeaux *parlement* with whom La Boétie could not possibly have been closely associated while still in Sarlat. This evidence has led some to conclude that *The Discourse* was written between 1550 and 1553, while La Boétie was at Orléans. The impact of other influences on him during those years can also be seen in *The Discourse*. These include the close links between the University of Orleans and the University of Padua — and thus with the humanism of the Italian Renaissance; the fact that La Boétie's study of law involved a wide-ranging philosophical study carried out in a spirit of free inquiry; that one of his teachers was the "fiery" Anne du Bourg who would later become a Protestant martyr; and that his fellow student and close friend Lambert Daneau would later be associated with the monarchomach writers. This thesis would be fully convincing if it were advanced by one of La Boétie's contemporaries. As it is, a compromise appears to be the most reasonable solution to this tangle: *The Discourse* was probably first drafted in 1548-49 and revised and enlarged between 1550 and 1553. This is Hincker's position. Cf. his "Introduction," *op.cit.*, p. 31.

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monarchy. During this trip he met and came under the influence of Michel de l'Hospital, adviser to Catherine de Medici and advocate of the "interim policy" — a policy designed to dampen the nascent religious strife by officially tolerating the practice of Calvinism while upholding Catholicism as the state religion.[6] Upon his return to Bordeaux, La Boétie was charged with carrying out this policy and was subsequently involved in a number of pacifications campaigns against Hugenots whose own intolerance had become intolerable. During one of these campaigns in 1563, he was struck by the plague and died a few weeks later.

A year before his death, La Boétie wrote the *Memoire touchant l'Edit de Janvier 1562,* a frankly conjectural piece.[7] Here, he argues that the January Edict (the formal implementation of the "interim policy") was simply unworkable given the fanaticism of the contestants. What was needed, he claimed, was a new, more authoritarian compromise in which the Calvinists would be suppressed and Catholicisim would be reformed in a "Protestant" direction. His argument is grounded not in religious considerations, but in a concern for political efficacy whereby public order and national unity would be maintained through the reinforcement of the monarchy's authority. This concern contradicts the thrust of *The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*. The latter is by no means a conjectural work. Montaigne went so far as to claim that La Boétie's "mind was fashioned on the model of another age than this,"[8] and, as if to underline the point, he followed this statement by an essay titled "On Cannibals."[9] Indeed, it is difficult to locate *The Discourse* in the intellectual climate in which La Boétie lived. Although there is no lack of references to earlier and contemporary texts, *The Discourse* cannot be assimilated into or comprehended as a part of any of the many traditions of political and social thought mentioned in the work.[10] It is highly original.

What is crucial is the radical and totally unexpected manner in which La Boétie reads earlier and contemporary authors. This, in turn, points to the major shift in perspective implied in his formulation of a new problematic which reinterprets the classics.[11] One author may well have had a major impact on *The Discourse:*

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6. For a brief history of the struggle between Catholics and Huguenots during this period, see J.H. Elliott, *Europe Divided, 1559-1598* (Glasgow, 1968), pp. 90-104.

7. Having been discovered only quite recently, the "Mémoire" was not included in the complete works edited by Paul Bonnefon. It was, however, included in a later work also edited by Bonnefon and entitled *Le Discours de la Servitude Volontaire, suivi de Mémoire touchant l'Edit de Janvier 1562* (Paris, 1922).

8. *Essays, op.cit.,* p. 105.

9. This has been recently elaborated by Pierre Clastres, who argues that La Boétie, having read reports about the recently discovered continent of America, found the source of his inspiration in primitive societies that refuse the division between the state and civil society and thus the formation of any permanently constituted authority. While this argument relates to La Boétie's problem, it is not based on any real evidence. Cf. "Liberté, Malencontre, Innomable," in *Le Discours de la Servitude Volontaire* (Paris, 1976), p. 229.

10. Barrère has compiled a compendium of such references, which, although highly speculative, is so exhaustive that it would make *The Discourse* a collage of extracts. Cf. Joseph Barrère, *L'Humanisme et la Politique dans le Discours de la Servitude Volontaire* (Bordeaux, 1923).

11. La Boétie probably read Homer, Hippocrates, Plato, Xenophon, Tacitus, Terence, Virgil, Herodotus, Plutarch, Sutonius, Cicero, Pliny, Aristotle, Petrarch and Dion Chrystome, and possibly Aquinas, Dante, Thomas More, Balthazar Castiglione, Erasmus, the first French political theorist Claude de Seyssel (*La Grande Monarchie de France,* 1519), and Charles De Grassaille (*Regalium Franciae libri duo jura omnia et dignitates christianissimorum Galliae regum Continentas,* 1538). But one cannot speak of "influences" on the part of these authors: their writings bear no relation to the problem of voluntary servitude, even if certain phrases have been borrowed to develop secondary aspects of *The Discourse's* major argument.

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Machiavelli. Several commentators such as Barrère perceive *The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude* as a direct response to Machiavelli in spite of Machiavelli's name not being mentioned anywhere in the book. Having reduced Machiavelli's writings to a demonized version of the genre that he terms the "institution of the prince," Barrère claims that La Boétie opposed Machiavelli not in the customary fashion of counterposing the "good prince" to the tyrant, but by "instituting the people" as a counterweight to the prince.[12] A similar but simpler relation between La Boétie and Machiavelli was discerned by Mesnard, who believes that "one teaches the prince how to compel their [his subjects'] acquiescence, while the other reveals to the people the power that would lie in their refusal."[13] La Boétie, however, uses Machiavelli's ideas to support his own argument.[14] The distinction between the two theorists is perhaps best phrased by Abensour and Gauchet: while Machiavelli sought to conceptualize "power with liberty," La Boétie, "stopping in the 'great refusal,' was compelled to conceptualize power against liberty."[15] This formulation suggests that in La Boétie power becomes bathed in a strange new light, which renders it problematic and thereby opens up the horizon of liberty. In both La Boétie and Machiavelli, power is detached from any reference to transcendence. Power is unveiled as the arbitrary creation of man.

This shift in the mode in which the socio-political order was conceptualized, and which marks the beginnings of modern political philosophy, raises another question: why did the socio-political order become visible in this new light at this time? Does it mean the emergence of a new form of domination? In the case of La Boétie's *Discourse*, the relation between the text and its context is obscure. The peasant uprising was, as suggested earlier, an important inspiration for *The Discourse*.[16] Provoked by the imposition of a salt tax, this revolt began smouldering in 1542 near La Rochelle, and by 1548 it had reached serious proportions, covering almost the entire Guyenne. Salt tax collectors were assassinated by armed peasant militias which roamed the countryside and gained entry into those towns — most notably Bordeaux — where *gabeleurs* sought refuge. By 1549 the rebellion had been bloodily repressed and, in reprisal for opening its gates to the insurgents, Bordeaux's special privileges

12. "Seeking . . . a theoretical remedy for a no less theoretical tyranny, he [La Boétie] thought of 'instituting' the victim by opening his eyes, but obviously he 'institutes' the prince at the same time. In La Boétie's thought a good 'institution' of the prince is the primordial guarantee of the wisdom of a government by 'one alone,' but the good 'institution of the people' constitutes the only true brake on tyranny. . . ." Barrère, *op.cit.*, p. 244. He goes on to speak of La Boétie's theory of "reciprocal counterweights of the institution of the prince and of the people," thereby rendering him into a precursor of classical liberalism. Despite its relative subtlety, this interpretation is simply fantastic. Nowhere in *The Discourse* is the prince, even a good prince, perceived as the primordial guarantee of the wisdom of a government by "one alone." On the contrary, the tendency is to question the "wisdom of a government by 'one alone,' " and to strip it of any primordial guarantees. The "institution of the people," which La Boétie certainly favors, is hardly placed within the framework of a monarchical system of checks and balances.

13. Pierre Mesnard, *L'Essor de la Philosophie au XVIe Siècle, op.cit.*, p. 400.

14. As Lefort writes: "The praise of conspirators inspired by liberty whose success is assured, the affirmation that people under a tyranny become 'cowardly and effeminate,' the contrast of enslaved men who neither desire nor know how to fight with free men . . ., the condemnation of princes who utilized foreign mercenaries for fear of arming their own people," these themes of Machiavelli's *Discourses* are reiterated in *The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*. Cf. Claude Lefort, "Le nom d'Un," in *Le Discours de la Servitude Volontaire* (Paris, 1976), p. 285.

15. *Les Leçons de la Servitude et leur Destin, op.cit.*, p. xxix.

16. The peasant uprising is discussed at length in Abensour and Gauchet, *op.cit.* Cf. also François Hincker's "Introduction" and above all, Yves-Marie Bercé's *Croquants et Nu-Pieds: Les Soulèvements paysans en France du XVIe au XIXe Siècle* (Paris, 1974).

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were withdrawn and its university and *parlement* were temporarily closed.

This was not France's first peasant revolt, but it was the first of a new type and would serve as a model for those occurring in the next few centuries. Unlike the peasant rebellions of earlier periods, it was not directed against the nobility: the latter played an equivocal role, sometimes joining and even supporting the revolt, and sometimes sheltering the tax collectors and having their dwellings pillaged as a consequence. This uprising was directed instead at the *gabeleurs*, the most immediate representatives of a distant monarchy. The root of this novel hatred for the state that motivated such an unprecedented uprising lay in the unprecedented nature of the latter's intervention in the community. "The salt-tax collectors were not simply considered wicked. They were decorated with the term inventors. Enumerating the abuses attributed to the government of the province, the communards introduced each article in their catalogue by repeating 'another invention... another novelty....' The rebels did not refuse the tax, but new taxes. The salt-tax collectors were detestable because their procedures were not inscribed in tradition."[17] The rebellion was a struggle to preserve the autonomy of the village community, which had subsisted until then at a distance from the monarchic apparatus. The attempt by the monarchy to bend the social order to its fiscal needs is the first incursion of the state into the detail of civil society: the beginnings of what would become the absolutist and later the modern state.[18]

The state's attack on the power of semi-representative institutions, including the *parlements*, the provincial Estates and the Estates General — institutions which upheld the principle of regional autonomy and placed limits on the monarch's authority — began under Francis I. New central courts were created by the royal council, the *lits de justice* became an important institution of royal authority, and government processes, including the management of revenue, were transferred from local magnates to royal officials. The growth of an increasingly large bureaucracy and the corresponding extension of royal authority in the first half of the 16th century in what was already the least limited and most centralized monarchy in Europe led contemporary historians to speak of "a monarchy on the road to absolutism." This perspective was shared by many who "felt that comparatively speaking, the king of France was hard to distinguish from a true despot."[19]

The peasant revolt, the decline of the relatively autonomous regional institutions, the emergence of a centralized governmental apparatus, and the political debates of the period point to the emergence of the very principle of the modern state: a secretly secular state which recognizes no authority above its own, and which refuses all traditional limits. It is a state which circumscribes "civil society" within a common territory and represents the latter in terms of a national identity; a state which seeks to establish itself as the guarantee of society's identity, unity and coherence, as the bearer of general constraint and as the source of its own legitimacy — in short, a state which

17. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

18. If one accepts the thesis that *The Discourse* was written under the shadow of this revolt, then there can be no doubt that La Boétie perceived voluntary servitude not simply in the passive consent to domination — for such consent was lacking — but also in the active opposition to domination or, more precisely, in the limits of this opposition. Thus he notes: "Actually the people never blame the tyrant for their suffering" (p. 85). And in fact the peasant insurgents opposed only the monarchy's representatives and never the monarchy itself, that distant incarnation of domination wrapped in transcendence and impressed in tradition. La Boétie was probably sympathetic to the peasant revolt, but this sympathy was marked by a distance — and this distance was not simply a class distance.

19. G.R. Elton, *Reformation Europe, 1517-1559* (Glasgow, 1963), p. 115.

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seeks to present society as its own product.

*The Discourse* originally circulated in manuscript form among a small group of humanists — not unlike the modern-day *samizdat*. It was in this form that it was first read by Montaigne. *The Discourse* led a subterranean existence for the next two centuries, known only to the *esprits dangereux* of the age. It was included in the editions of Montaigne's *Essays* after 1727 and thus gained a wider audience.[20] It almost certainly had an impact on Jean-Paul Marat. Although he does not mention *The Discourse* in *The Chains of Slavery,* he does raise the problem of voluntary servitude and duplicates certain of La Boétie's examples. *The Discourse* was published in 1789 at the end of the *Discours de Marius, plébéien et consul,* and in 1790 in an incomplete version contained in the *8ième Philippique de l'Ami de la Révolution.*

It was not until the 1830s that *The Discourse* had any significant impact. At this time, a new form of revolt and a new hatred of the state lent its sympathetic ear: the workers' movement was testing its strength in large-scale strikes in Paris and Lyon. *The Discourse* was published in 1835 with a preface by Félicité de Lammenais, an author widely read in working-class circles at that time.[21] One year later, Charles Teste, a neo-Babeuvist and friend of Buanarotti, transcribed it into a more modern French and published it in Brussels, where he was in exile for "having excited disdain and hatred against a certain class of people, and for having provoked civil war."[22] Then Louis Blanc, author of *Organisation du Travail,* invoked it against the July Monarchy. In 1847, Pierre Leroux claimed that *The Discourse* was an anti-Hobbesian tract by anticipation in an article entitled "Discours sur la Doctrine de l'Humanité," which appeared in the *Revue Sociale.*[23] Another edition was published in 1863, prefaced this time by the Proudhonist and future Communard August Vermorel. Anarchists began claiming La Boétie as one of their own toward the end of the century.[24]

The proliferation of editions and references in the 20th century becomes too complex to trace in any detail, but we may indicate its importance by quoting from Claude Paulus for the *Benelux:* "In 1933 the Dutchman Barthelemy de Ligt, having analyzed it in a singularly penetrating manner, believes it possible to use its critical value not only against the person of the tyrant, but also against all forces of domination and exploitation: statism, the capitalist regime and colonial exploitation. Similarly (1939), the Belgian publicist Ham Day compares the Boétian message with the famous slogan: 'The emancipation of the workers will be the work of the workers

20. An English translation apparently appeared in 1735, but I have been unable to find out who published it or for what purposes.

21. Lammenais preached what might be termed an apocalyptic Christian social democracy. Cf. Jacques Droz, *Europe Between Revolutions, 1815-1848* (Glasgow, 1967), pp. 78, 194-197. Lammenais' "Préface" can be found in *Le Discours de la Servitude Volontaire* (Paris, 1976), pp. 3-39.

22. Paulus, *Essai sur La Boétie, op.cit.,* p. 36. Charles Teste's transcription and "Avant-propos" are included in *Le Discours de la Servitude Volontaire* (Paris, 1976), pp. 167-225.

23. Jacques Droz writes: "Pierre Leroux, a former member of the Carbonari, foreman and founder of the *Globe,* had gone through a stage of Saint-Simonism, and had never succeeded in ridding his socialism of pantheistic and esoteric tendencies." *Europe between the Revolutions, 1815-1848, op.cit.,* p. 74. Actually, his remains one of the more remarkable discussions of La Boétie and suggests a writer of some originality.

24. This was the claim of the anarchist Max Nettlau in *Der Vorfrühling der Anarchie: Ihre historische Entwicklung den Anfangen bis zum Jahre 1864* (1925) as well as of the historian of anarchism E.V. Zenker in *Anarchism* (1898), cited in Rothbard, "The Political Thought of Etienne de La Boétie," *op.cit.,* p. 39. Special mention should be made of the German anarcho-syndicalist Gustav Landauer, who included a section on La Boétie in his book *Die Revolution* (1907).

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themselves.' Both commentators find in it, moreover, the occasion to raise the alert against the totalitarian menace. A little later, the *Propaganda Abteilung* in occupied Belgium places La Boétie on the list of forbidden authors."[25]

*The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude* opens with a quotation from Homer: "I see no good in having several lords, let one alone be master, let one alone be king" (p. 45). Aristotle used this quotation as an introduction to his discussion of different types of constitutions in *The Politics*.[26] He agreed with Homer's preference for one master. La Boétie, on the other hand, rejects both one and several masters. Asserting that monarchy is preferable to "other types of government" that have several masters and are "that many times more unfortunate" (p. 46), he cannot resist raising questions about the nature of government by one alone (and thereby refuting all those commentators who would restrict his criticism to the 'bad prince'): "still I should like to know, before casting doubt on the place that monarchy should occupy among commonwealths, whether or not it belongs to such a group, since it is hard to believe that there is anything of common wealth in a country where everything belongs to one master."

In the same breath, La Boétie has refused the position of the master, the master political theorist, and the master poet. He writes that the populace is "delighted and charmed by the name of one man alone" (p. 46), and he confirms this when he ironizes on a contemporary French poet, Ronsard, whose *Franciade* is a eulogy to absolutism (pp. 74-75). The suggestion is that the relation between master and slave is tied in part to language's capacity to enchant. Yet La Boétie's discourse is not without its own charm, for it is written in an extremely fluid and rhetorical style: the reader is carried away by its rhythm and does not so much read it as listen to it. But the reader must be on his guard: the rhetorical tricks that La Boétie employs seek their own negation.

When La Boétie first poses the problem of voluntary servitude, he writes in the first person singular: "For the present I should merely like to understand" (p. 46). Once the full scope of the problem has been outlined, he seeks to involve the reader and writes in the first person plural: "What name shall we..." (p. 47). And then once the reader has been drawn in, he drops the first person plural and directly confronts the reader with the spectacle of his own servitude: "Poor, wretched and stupid nations determined on your own misfortune and blind to your own good! You let yourselves be deprived" (p. 51). Having identified the reader with the people, La Boétie then exhorts them to throw off their chains and suggests how this is to be done. At this point, *The Discourse* has reached an almost demagogical climax. And yet in the next paragraph, the second person is abandoned and the appeal to the people is dropped, even denied. He writes, "Doctors are no doubt correct in warning us not to touch incurable wounds; and I am presumably taking chances in preaching as I do to a people, which has long lost all sensitivity.... Let us therefore understand by logic, if we can, how it happens that this obstinate willingness has become so deeply rooted" (p. 55).

The people, immediately after having been exhorted to action, are apparently rejected. This rejection is due in part to La Boétie's disdain for them — a disdain inscribed in the very nature of the problem of voluntary servitude. But he never perceives voluntary servitude as a brute fact embedded either in human nature or in the nature of the masses. The appeal to the people ultimately remains the text's *raison d'être*: it is the solution, however distant, to its problem, and as such it is taken up again in the very last paragraph of *The Discourse*. Thus, this rejection cannot simply

25. *Essai sur La Boétie, op.cit.*, p. 35.
26. The following interpretation is heavily indebted to Claude Lefort's *Le nom d'Un, op.cit.*

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be attributed to scorn for the masses; a more complex motivation can be found in the nature of the term 'people.' When he addresses the people, La Boétie constitutes them at a distance from himself as an other, as the object of his sermonizing. And is this not what the tyrant does? Does the tyrant not separate himself from the people in order to subsume them under a single identity, as a unified object capable of being submitted to the control of the "One?" In appealing to the people and offering them his advice, La Boétie occupies the position of the master, but in renouncing this place, he also renounces his own authority except insofar as it can be linked to knowledge. Henceforth, the people will be referred to in the plural, resisting any term that would collapse them together. Henceforth, *The Discourse* is addressed only to friends, to those willing to enter La Boétie's discussion as equals.

When La Boétie first presents the spectacle of voluntary servitude, he describes it as if it were obvious to all. "It is so common," he writes, "that one must grieve the more and wonder the less" (p. 46). Yet, however common it may be, he says, "the fact of its existence cannot fail to strike one as strange, even incredible. Who could really believe," he goes on, "that one man alone may mistreat a hundred thousand and deprive them of their liberty?" (p. 49). Even more extraordinary is that the voluntary character of this servitude means that the solution is both evident and simple: "Obviously there is no need of fighting to overcome this single tyrant, for he is automatically defeated if the country refuses to consent to its own enslavement.... From all these indignities...you can deliver yourselves if you try not by taking action, but merely by willing to be free.... I do not ask that you place hands upon the tyrant to topple him over, but simply that you support him no longer; then you will behold him, like a giant colossus whose pedestal has been pulled away, fall of his own weight and break to pieces?" (pp. 52-53). This advocacy of non-violent mass-resistance is often seen as La Boétie's cental tactical discovery. But is that an adequate reading of this passage? Are we to believe that the tyrant will be overthrown simply by the masses' will to be free? Or that all the different desires of the populace can simultaneously coalesce into a single will? No, neither voluntary servitude nor the manner of its overcoming are seen as empirical phenomena. The question of voluntary servitude neces sarily summons a response, and the very irrationality of voluntary servitude elicits the absurdity of its solution. It is at this point that La Boétie shifts rhetorical styles and "breaks" with the people. Although non-violent mass resistance is never explicitly denied, it is not mentioned again, even though other — and very different — tactics are suggested.

La Boétie does not conceive of voluntary servitude as proceeding from the will of God: man is the author of his own servitude. But this does not mean that voluntary servitude results from a natural or even psychological cause such as weakness, cowardice or even esteem for the wisest and bravest of men. Voluntary servitude is not a quality internal to man which allows him to be constituted as an object to be treated empirically by a detached observer. It can only be understood through the individual's analysis of his own desire. The very decision to examine the phenomenon of voluntary servitude implies the will to overcome such servitude, and thus implies the desire for liberty.

Since the character of the desire for servitude is unnatural (p. 48), one would expect that the desire for liberty would prove eminently natural. La Boétie, however, defines the desire for liberty against the desire to possess things. Our longing for things continues even when we are not able to obtain them. The desire for liberty, on the other hand, is inseparable from its object — whence the extraordinary political judgment that liberty can be achieved by simply willing to be free. La Boétie suggests,

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therefore, that the desire for liberty is less natural than the desire to possess things. "A longing common to both the wise and the foolish... is the longing for all those things which, when acquired, would make them happy. Yet one element appears to be lacking. We do not know how it happens that nature fails to place within man a burning desire for liberty" (p. 51). And does not this apparent absence of the desire for liberty threaten the realization of an individual's desire for things? Does nature fail man? Or are we perhaps to perceive a secret kinship between the desire for liberty and the desire for servitude, on the grounds that the desire for servitude also cannot be detached from its object? The enigma of voluntary servitude deepens when placed under the indeterminacy of desire.

La Boétie later seeks to restore a notion of natural liberty, but this analysis takes place on a different level from the former discussion and thus does not involve retracing the latter. He does not attempt to establish the "positivity" of the desire for liberty, but establishes a basis for the manifestation of this "unnatural" desire. La Boétie begins by noting that "if we led our lives according to the ways intended by nature...we should be intuitively obedient to our parents" (p. 55); however, he refuses to set up the parental model as a political ideal and asserts that "later we should adopt reason as our guide and become slaves to nobody." Yet, liberty is not grounded in reason: there is "in our soul some native seed of reason," but he dismisses this as only a hypothesis "loudly discussed by academicians and treated by all schools of philosophers." For La Boétie, liberty cannot be located in the individual who has discovered through his reason and through obedience to its commands that he is his own master. Liberty is not rooted in the individual man but in relations among men; liberty stems from "the fact that nature has cast us all in the same mould in order that we may behold in one another companions or brothers" (p. 56).

La Boétie suggests, furthermore, that this is an equality that does not suppress but admits all differences in order to fulfill itself. For, he explains, the existence of these differences does not mean that nature intended to place "us within this world as if it were a field of battle," but rather that she "intended to give occasion for brotherly love to become manifest, some of us having the strength to give help to others who are in need of it." The key term in this argument is *entre-connaître,* translated into English as "to behold in each other," but also suggesting the recognition of each other, knowledge of each other, and knowledge through each other. Language makes this possible: nature "has bestowed upon us all the great gift of voice and speech for fraternal relationship, thus achieving by the common and mutual statement of our thoughts a communion of our wills." La Boétie situates liberty through *entre-connaissance* and language in that place where nature opens up to the indeterminacy of the properly social realm. Liberty is not located in a single subject but in the simultaneous separation and conjunction of subjects; liberty is not located in the integration of the particulars into the determinate universality of a totalized reason, but in an interaction between particulars that resists any finite totalization. Liberty is found in the exchange of speech which presupposes a difference in speakers so that they recognize their similarity. Thus, tyranny is the attempt to suppress this plurality and this indeterminacy. Tyranny represents a situation in which only one speaks while everyone else listens, in which the masses are "charmed by the name of one man alone" and can only repeat the speech of the tyrant.[27] At the same time, *The*

27. This argument is of paramount importance and is likely to be missed by the English reader because of the faulty translation of a key passage, which reads: "since she (nature) has revealed in every possible manner her intention, not so much to associate us as to make us one organic whole, there can be no further doubt that we are all naturally free, inasmuch as we are all comrades" (p.

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*Discourse* is directed not only against "government by one alone," but also against that which is both larger than and indistinguishable from the latter, the totalized "one organic whole" established by, centered in, and embodied in the unitary identity of the tyrant.

La Boétie then introduces another and much less sophisticated argument in support of natural liberty; an argument that seeks to demonstrate that even animals "suffer misery in subjection and long for liberty" (p. 58). This argument, however, tends to contradict the preceding one. In the first place, instead of treating reason under the question mark of a hypothesis, it explicitly identifies reason with nature (p. 56). In the second place, the argument is based on those who are "made for the service of man" and not for the service of each other. Thirdly, by seeking an instinctual basis for the desire for liberty, La Boétie endows the latter with a naturalistic character previously denied in his discussion of the different types of desire and with an asocial positivity absent from his notion of *entre-connaissance*. There is no explanation for why he introduces this argument, except perhaps as a means to trick those to whom he would not refer to as his friends. He concludes in terms that suggest he is not entirely unaware of the discrepancy between the arguments: "What evil chance has so denatured man that he, the only creature really born to be free, lacks the memory of his original condition and the desire to return to it?" (p. 58). If man is the "only creature really born to be free" is it not because nature intended him for "fraternal relationship"? Once the earlier analysis has been recalled, even if only indirectly, the argument placing the "brute beasts in the pulpit" is silently abandoned. Perhaps it was intended simply to reintroduce the spectacle of domination so that a preliminary response can be given to the original question of "how it happens that so many men...suffer under a single tyrant who has no other power than the power they give him."

Before entering into this discussion, however, La Boétie pauses to clarify the parameters of the term "tyranny" in order to distinguish his usage from the traditional definition: "There are three kinds of tyrants; some receive their proud position through elections by the people, others by force of arms, others by inheritance" (p. 58). "As for stating a preference, I cannot grant there is any. For although the means of coming into power differ, still the method of ruling is practically the same; those who are elected act as if they were breaking in bullocks; those who are conquerors make the people their prey; and those who are heirs plan to treat them as if they were natural slaves" (p. 59). As La Boétie had already suggested, the problem of voluntary servitude ellides the distinction between different types of government in order to question the very existence of government, the emergence of a separate instance of authority.

At last, La Boétie is prepared to respond to his central problem. He gives us three answers, explaining the enigma of voluntary servitude with reference to the force of custom, the ruses of the tyrant, and the mediations between the tyrant and his subjects.

"Custom," he notes, "is the first reason for voluntary servitude" (pp. 64-65). The discussion, proceeding through a series of carefully chosen examples, designed to counterbalance each other, attempts to demonstrate that men "must either be driven

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56). The original French, on the other hand, goes as follows: "si elle (la nature) a monstré en toutes choses qu'elle ne vouloit pas tant nous faire tous unis que tous uns: il ne faut pas faire doute que nos soions tous naturellement libres, puis que nous sommes tous compaignons." While the distinction between *tous unis* and *tous uns* cannot be easily translated into English, the original meaning would have been better served had the translation read: "not so much to make us one organic whole but to associate us."

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by force or led into [enslavement] by deception" (p. 59), but that, once enslaved, they become content "to live in their native circumstances, unaware of any other state or right" (p. 60). The argument is phrased in terms of a contrast between innate liberty and a servitude acquired by force of social circumstance and habit. However, this distinction between the innate and the acquired is handled in such a way that it constantly tends to obscure the problem of voluntary servitude and is therefore undermined even as it is made. Thus, when La Boétie claims that, when given a choice, individuals will always choose liberty — a notion contradicting the voluntary character of servitude — he immediately points to an exception, the Israelis under King Saul (p. 58). Later, he moves too far in the other, environmental, direction, and claims that those living under tyranny become totally habituated to their enslavement. He writes: "It is incredible how as soon as a people become subject, it promptly falls into such complete forgetfulness of its freedom" (p. 60). The word "promptly" can only jar the reader. Are we to believe that custom has no relation to time? La Boétie continues: "obeying so easily and so willingly that one is led to say that the people have not so much lost their liberty as gained their servitude." Are we not confronted here with an active fulfilling of the desire for servitude, and not simply a passive forgetfulness of liberty? Then a few pages later, just after he has claimed that men under tyranny are only capable of speaking the language of servitude, he states that the desire for liberty can never be fully extinguished. "There are always a few, better endowed than others, who feel the weight of the yoke and cannot restrain themselves from attempting to shake it off" (p. 65).[28] These few not only desire liberty but, unlike those who are satisfied with "what is at their feet," desire knowledge of the past and of a possible future. This is not to say that those who desire liberty are actually free, that they are capable of maintaining an "inner freedom" independent of all socio-political circumstances. Liberty is contingent on *entre-connaissance*, as La Boétie told us earlier, and he illustrates this with reference to the Grand Turk. This tyrant, realizing that "books and teachers. . . give men the sense to comprehend their own nature and to detest tyranny," has sought to repress as far as possible the flow of information and to restrict the scope of education. Thus, those who preserve a sense of liberty "remain ineffective because they are not known to each other; under the tyrant they have lost freedom of action, of speech, and almost of thought; they are alone in their fantasies" (p. 66).[29] The desire for liberty is ineffective if it is not linked to *entre-connaissance*, and the desire for knowledge, which is tied to the desire for liberty, degrades into fantasy.

Nonetheless, La Boétie's stress on the irreducibility of the desire for liberty suggests

28. The original French suggests that the term "better endowed" should have been translated as "better born." It would, however, be wrong to attach too much significance to the term "better born," for throughout *The Discourse* La Boétie shows only disdain for the propertied, the nobility and the "best born" of all, the monarch. This phrase, and this section, display a certain elitism phrased above all in terms of the educated, who it could be argued were at that time usually better born, though not necessarily in the rigorous sense of a nobility. But this should be tempered by keeping in mind that this "revolutionary vanguard" and its conspiratorial politics only appears in the text after custom has been posed as all-embracing. As such, it responds in large part more to the particular type of political action. Unless these sections are contextualized in terms of the argument's development, we will be caught in a dilemma exemplified in the commentary of François Hincker. The latter affirms on one page that "until the revolution (of 1789) nobody in France affirmed the power of the masses with such force" ("Introduction," *op. cit.*, p. 29), and a few pages later in blatant contradiction that "La Boétie manifests only disdain form the populace" (p. 32).

29. I have revised the English translation in keeping with the French by substituting "fantasies" for "aspirations."

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that tyranny can never be fully realized, and thus he re-establishes the possibility for political action against tyranny. After associating the desire for liberty with knowledge and with memory of the past, La Boétie provides a series of explicit references to and reflections on ideas contained in the works of classical authors, notably Hippocrates, Xenophon, and Tacitus. Knowledge of the past, however, remains purely academic unless linked to knowledge of the present, and eventually to action in the present. It is not coincidental that La Boétie alludes on three occasions in this section — and only in this section — to the situation in contemporary France. These allusions seem to exempt France from the discussion, but the satirical intent is evident. The subsequent discussion on conspiracy supports the efficacy of action and goes so far as to claim that "whoever studies the deeds of earlier days and the annals of antiquity will find practically no instance of heroes who failed to deliver their country from evil hands when they set about their task with a firm, whole-hearted, and sincere intention" (p. 66).

La Boétie then turns to a discussion of the second of his responses to the problem of voluntary servitude, the ruses of power by which the tyrant maintains the enslavement of his subjects, including the hiring of mercenaries, the attempt to render the populace weak and effeminate, the proclamation of noble intentions for the most dastardly deeds, religious devices, and the symbolism of power. La Boétie emphasizes the efficacy of these mechanisms and suggests that they are not just imposed from above onto an impassive populace. "Do not imagine that there is any bird more easily caught by decoy...than are all those poor fools neatly tricked into servitude by the slightest feather passed, so to speak, before their mouths" (p. 69). These mechanisms — particularly those of a symbolic nature — must be linked to the adoration of something that fills the populace's desire and nourishes its belief. The exact nature of this "something" is infinitely variable but it takes on a determinate form in each instance: the desire for servitude can attach itself to 'sacred vessels and standards with flames of gold" (p. 74), "the great toe of Pyrrhus" (p. 72), the memory of a dead prince, or, as in the case of the Assyrians, it can even manifest itself without being attached to the representation of a real master. The extreme variety of these "objects" recalls an opposition with the desire for possessing things noted earlier. In all these examples the implication is that voluntary servitude opens an imaginary realm in which the enigmatic unity represented by the "One" can be celebrated.

The third reason and the one that La Boétie considers "the mainspring and foundation of tyranny" (p. 77) concerns not the relation between the tyrant and his subjects, but the mediations by the tyrant's ministers, advisers, generals, etc. At this point a distinction appears to be introduced between those who merely submit and those who, actively seeking the tyrant's favor, maintain and enforce his power. La Boétie argues that the tyrant maintains four or five as his representatives and these four or five have 600 who profit under them, and the latter in their turn benefit 6,000. "The consequence of all this is fatal indeed. And whoever is pleased to unwind the skein will observe that not the six thousand, but a hundred thousand and even millions cling to the tyrant by this cord to which they are tied" (p. 78). Yet, when La Boétie speaks of "a hundred thousand and even millions," there can be no doubt he is referring not merely to the governmental bureaucracy, but to the populace at large. It is as if each person, no matter what his position in the social hierarchy, has internalized the relation between master and slave, acting as a slave to those above and, by identifying with the tyrant's power, as a petty master to those below. Yet, while the master-slave relation is internal to each and every one, the population is at the same time divided between those who dominate and those who are dominated; between the propertied

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and powerful who, corrupted by avarice and ambition, assemble around the tyrant in order to share in the power and booty, and on the other hand, the townspeople and peasants who simply "discharge their obligation" without further ado. Without denying the full extent of voluntary servitude, La Boétie allows it to migrate up the social scale where it manifests itself in an even more formidable and intense form. With regard to these upper strata he writes: "Can it be in any way except in folly that you approach a tyrant, withdrawing further from your own liberty and, so to speak, embracing with both hands your servitude? Let such men lay aside briefly their ambition, or let them forget for a moment their avarice, and look at themselves as they really are. Then they will realize clearly that the townspeople, the peasants whom they trample underfoot and treat worse than convicts or slaves...are nevertheless, in comparison with themselves, better off and fairly free" (pp. 79-80). In this sense, whatever La Boétie claimed when first laying out the spectacle of voluntary servitude, is now repeated with even greater force: given that those surrounding the tyrant are at the beck and call of his every whim, they have lost the free disposition of their actions and thoughts; their attraction to the tyrant is the source of their own undoing; and finally, the power that the tyrant holds over them is actually the power they bestow on the tyrant who would crumble without their support.

One might think that La Boétie is reverting back to the traditional conception of the tyrant, but once again such error is corrected by returning to the notion of friendship. The tyrant, he writes, can have no friends but only accomplices, since "elevated above others, [the tyrant] finds himself already beyond the pale of friendship, which receives its real substance from an equality that, to proceed without a limp, must have its two limbs equal" (pp. 83-84). Friendship then is given a structural aspect that precludes any internal reform of tyranny by a "return to legality." In this sense, tyranny is not located simply in the person of the tyrant; and, accordingly, La Boétie launches his final attacks not against the tyrant, but against his supports. Those who surround the tyrant, he notes, are compensated for their avarice and ambition by the hatred of the common classes. In their own way these classes comprehend the division between dominant and dominated — even though they still hold the tyrant himself in awe. In this sense they still bear the marks of voluntary servitude, and yet because they resist domination, there is the possibility, even if it is not explicitly mentioned in the text, of an "alliance" between these classes and those few who preserve a sense of liberty in the more complete sense of the word. Friendship is, after all, rooted in *entre-connaissance* and cannot be considered exclusive.

The enigma to which *The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude* is addressed is still unsolved. Three responses to the original question have been given. The first, which points to custom, tended to be undermined insofar as it veiled the voluntary character of servitude in a state of freedom and indicated the irreducible character of liberty under tyranny. The second response, phrased in terms of the ruses of power, almost fell into the trap of perceiving domination as something solely opposed from above and sidestepped the real question by only underlining the ability of these ruses to draw on the deepest sources of voluntary servitude. The third explanation, based on the mediations between the tyrant and his subjects, only displaced the problem in all its irrationality up the social scale. Unfortunately, these responses only approach the phenomenon they were meant to explain. The object of the analysis constantly overflows the terms in which it is posed.

Running throughout *The Discourse*, there is a more subtle response. But the terms of this response — the distinction between the different types of desire, the critique of totality, the concepts of *entre-connaissance*, language, friendship, and so on —

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provide only indications. They allow us to perceive the limits of the three "visible" responses, but they are never constructed into a theory that would render voluntary servitude fully transparent. There is no doubt that it was not easy for La Boétie to address the problem. The detours, the contortions, the abandonment of insufficient formulations, and the maintenance of overt contradictions all suggest the difficulties he had in writing this text. Perhaps, the enigma of voluntary servitude cannot be fully explained, for it cannot be seen externally, detached from our own implication within that to which we submit. To borrow the words of Landauer, "tyranny is not a fire that one must extinguish, that one can extinguish, because it is not an external evil, but an internal absence."[30] Perhaps, because voluntary servitude is this absence and because as such its overcoming can derive no benefit from external guarantees, the final exhortation that closes *The Discourse* is phrased in terms of a "self-invocation": "Let us therefore learn while there is yet time, let us learn to do good" (p. 86). Perhaps the only "ultimate" response to the enigma of voluntary servitude lies on the horizon of our own liberty.

We must insist on this enigmatic quality because, curiously enough, in the historical appropriation of La Boétie's *Discourse*, in the secondary literature that has sought to use it either as a weapon or as an instrument of analysis, there generally remains something inadmissible about the problematic of voluntary servitude. Yet, curiously enough, this problematic has continually been reduced to that of legitimation or hegemony, that is to say, to problematics which suppose an external instance of power that manipulates a basically passive mass from the outside, and which counterposes this instance to a society that contains the principle of its own order and salvation within itself, if only it could be liberated from the parasite encumbrance of this or that specific thing. We had suggested earlier that the *Discourse's* historical possibility was to be situated within the context of the emergence of the modern state; we must now suggest that its radical originality is due, historically speaking, to the fact that the nation of civil society (as a substance that is separate from the state and potentially exists as its negation) had not yet emerged. In this sense to label La Boétie's pamphlet as anarchist is rather anachronistic. Indeed, the *Discourse of Voluntary Servitude* forces us to think power without completely identifying it with the state apparatus. And it invites us to envison the possibility of opposing the state without resorting to the conception of society as a potentially totalized entity, where in appearance all power would have disappeared because fully internalized, and where society would be truly "one" because delivered of all signs of externality and ultimately of otherness.

*Brian Singer*

30. "Extrait de la Révolution," *op.cit.*, p. 83.

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# Short Journal Reviews: *

CANADIAN JOURNAL OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL THEORY, 2:3 (Fall 1978) University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 2E9. JOHANN W. MOHR, *"Post-Cartesian Transformations: The Cloud of Knowing."* An allegorical and epigrammatic exploration of the mind-body split in relation to the classical problem of knowledge. More lucid and wittier than most streams of phenomenological self-consciousness, Mohr's perspective is limited by the same refusal of politics and by the same undialectical stress on the moment of subjective authenticity. J.G.A. POCOCK, *"Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Ancients and Moderns."* An important essay, both in the light it throws on Renaissance Italian political thought and in the contribution it makes to a critique of Leo Strauss' neo-Platonic reaction against "modernity." Pocock shows that Machiavelli and Guicciardini were distinguished from truly modern political thinkers by lacking a sense of historical development; and that their thought is to be interpreted as a mixture of a return to classical Roman conceptions (fortune, virtue, etc.) and an Augustinian insistence on the disjuncture between the dramas of the worldly and heavenly cities. Strauss is criticized for confounding this archaic ideological complex with the bugaboo he takes for the modern. WILLIAM LEISS, *"Needs, Exchanges and the Fetishism of Objects."* One of a continuing series of published essays by Leiss that aims at redefining the Marxist conception of needs in the context of the contemporary "high intensity market setting." Here, he explores the contributions made by Sahlins, Baudrillard, Firth, Scitovsky and Hirsch to an understanding of the cultural and symbolic dimensions of use value; and on this basis reformulates the problem of reification and commodity fetishism in terms of the symbolization of human artifacts. What is eliminated, polemically, is an evaluative ontology. JOHN KEANE, *"The Legacy of Political Economy: Thinking with and against Claus Offe."* A careful assessment of Offe's work on the theory of late capitalist crisis, which argues that there is a contradiction between his recognition of the structural distinctiveness of contemporary capitalism (new interpenetration of state and economy, new class configurations) and the domination of his political thinking by an obsolete Marxist framework. Keane suggests that the emergence of the demand for liberation within the sphere of symbolic interaction, quite independently of the continually erupting demand for emancipation from alienated labor, points to novel forms of political struggle and a process of transformation unintelligible in traditional left-wing terms. But what? F.R. CRISTI, *"Hegel on Possession and Property."* Traces the possession-property distinction in Enlightenment thought culminating in Hegel to show how the individual right to property was inscribed in the most radical formulations of bourgeois political philosophy. An unsurprising conclusion, but an interesting extension of Macpherson's thesis concerning the centrality of possessive individualism in classical liberalism. JOSEPH BENDERSKY, *"Carl Schmitt Confronts the English-speaking World."* A sympathetic examination of recent work by Schwab, which attempts to rehabilitate (for liberals) the work of the German legal philosopher who dominated that country's non-Marxist tradition of political theory from the Wilhelmine period to Adenauer. Schmitt's loyalty to the Nazi regime is difficult to defend from a progressive standpoint, and the attempt to detach the legacy of his thought from the pro-state authoritarianism that was one of its guiding threads remains unconvincing. Reviews by David Shugarman, Arthur Kroker, Richard Vernon and Clayton Jones of recent books by, respectively, Hirsch and Miles, Weinstein, Hayek, and Hacker and Raz (an anthology on H.L.A. Hart). AW

CANADIAN JOURNAL OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL THEORY, 3:1 (Winter 1979) Main section on Marx and Marxism Reconsidered reprints papers from the Conference for the Study of Political Thought held in San Francisco, March 1979. RONALD F. PERRIN, *"Marxism and the Reification of Politics."* Argues against Leiss for the retention of the concepts of reification and fetishism. For Perrin, these notions provide a basis for a critical understanding of rigid and sectarian divisions of contemporary Marxist thought. He examines the deforming impact of reified thinking, particularly in relation to the notion of the proletariat, on the North American and Russian left-wing traditions, and he gives a qualified endorsement to Eurocommunism as the one contemporary current that seems to have succeeded in defetishizing

*This section has been compiled by John Fekete, Department of English Literature, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. K9J 7B8. The following have contributed reviews: Gretchen Arnold, John Fekete, Robert John, Michael Lacy, Pam McCallum, Odessa Pierce, Harland Prechel, Robert Rucker, Rachel Scharff, Jimmy Lee Shaw, Andrew Wernick, Daniel Wildcat.

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its categories. HERBERT MARCUSE, *"The Reification of the Proletariat."* Sketches the way advanced capitalism has redefined the working class and, by generating "surplus consciousness" (Bahro) from the human potential that it both develops and stymies, has created a broader social basis of opposition than orthodox Marxism connotes by the term proletariat. A brief restatement of the political perspective Marcuse retained to the end. ALKIS KONTOS, *"Through a Glass Darkly: Ontology and False Needs."* Incisive and wide-ranging response to Leiss' rejection of philosophical anthropology. Generating the necessary categories out of the frameworks developed by Marcuse and Macpherson, Kontos takes free activity as an absolute ontological postulate and locates the dialectic of needs in the historical emergence of new demands and possibilities for satisfying them. Symptoms of psychic discontent count as evidence of frustrated need. By anchoring a critical ontology in the developing ground of real history, Kontos disentangles himself from neo-Feuerbachian metaphysics, but his line of argument would nevertheless cut little ice with a really hardened empiricist. C.B. MACPHERSON, *"Second and Third Thoughts on Needs and Wants."* Response to Kontos' criticisms of his distinction between needs and wants. Macpherson proposes a new position in which needs are defined in narrow, intermediate, or long-range terms. The second and third terms correspond to the distinction between true and false needs, the former to be equated with needs that can be satisfied within advanced capitalist culture and the latter with those that cannot be but which are feasible to strive for on the basis of contemporary technological developments. Argues against Leiss that some such distinction is essential for developing a critical perspective on the problem of human satisfaction. WILLIAM LEISS, *"Ontology and the 'Civilizing Moment' of Capital."* Responds to Kontos' criticisms with the argument that ontological postulates such as free, creative activity are empirically too vacuous to provide an adequate basis either for making practical political recommendations or for evaluating the alleged actual distortion of needing in advanced capitalism. ERICA SHEROVER, *"The Virtue of Poverty: Marx's Transformation of Hegel's Concept of the Poor."* Examines Marx's journalistic intervention into the Rheinland wood-gathering debates in 1842 in order to shed light on the philosophical roots of Marx's theory of the proletariat. Shows how in Marx's earliest formulations the notion that the proletariat is (potentially) the universal class is inextricably tied to the proposition that the propertyless are excluded, in Hegelian terms, from the estate structures of civil society. Approaches but does not pose the deconstructive implications for Marxist theory of detaching the "mature" Marx's notion of class struggle from its original entanglement with inverted Hegelian categories and with the specific socio-political experience of early 19th-century Germany. JEREMY SHAPIRO, commenting on Sherover's article, suggests that the theory of the revolutionary proletariat in the early Marx is a moralistic elevation of the poor typical of an anomic but ascendant middle class. Hence the difficulty of contesting ouvrièrist dogmatism by merely intellectual means. JOHN P. BURKE, *"Reification and Commodity Fetishism Revisited."* Dissects Marx's notion of commodity fetishism, distinguishing particularly between the moments of mystification and distortion-displacement. Consider's Marx's theory narrow in that it encompasses only the competitive, market-dominated stage of capitalism, and inflated in that it exaggerates the extent and practical significance of the perceptual mystification that it connotes. Similarly criticizes the concept of reification and suggests that behind the confused realist anti-phenomenalism common to both terms stands a normatively inflected supposition that the social ensemble should be grasped and criticized as a form of productive community. Burke questions whether the demystifying project Marx intended these terms to serve has much contribution to make toward the current definition or resolution of emergent social problems, but leaves unexplored the issue of what, if not these, the master categories of critical discourse ought to be. STANLEY MOORE, *"Seven Notes on Commodity Fetishism."* Commentary on Burke presented as theses that propose a different frame of interpretation for connecting Marx's notions of fetishism and reification with his political and historical philosophy. Stresses the way in which for Marx commodity fetishism arises from an objective appearance-reality disjunction peculiar to the middle phase of his historical dialectic. This progresses from community with exploitation to society with exploitation to community without exploitation — the culmination of social evolution in which free individuality can flourish. The problem for Moore is the relation between this dialectical teleology and the principles of historical materialism. Amen. BILL LEVANT, *"The Audience-commodity: On the Blind-spot Debate."* Attacks Murdoch's critique of Smythe's article (issues 1:3 and 2:2) as otiose. Insists on the theoretical importance of the audience commodity (rather than the cultural text) as cornerstone and starting point for a materialist analysis of mass communications. ANDREW WERNICK, *"Critical Theory and Practice: A Response to Ben Agger."* Takes Agger's examination of the Frankfurt School (issues 1:1 and 1:2) to task for its populist and pragmatist reduction of theory to praxis. CHRISTIAN LENHARDT,

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*"Civilization and its Contents."* Review of Elias' *The Civilizing Process*, just translated into English. Underlines the importance of manners in the development of historical civilizational critique. Argues, however, that Elias' pioneering study is flawed by unilinear liberal progressivism that ignored the relation and contradiction between the depersonalization of organized social violence and the gradual pacification of face-to-face conduct. PAMELA McCALLUM, *"Ideology and Cultural Theory."* Discusses the contrasting and complementary approaches of Eagleton's *Criticism and Ideology*, Fekete's *The Critical Twilight*, and Williams' *Marxism and Literature*, with regard to the analysis and degeneration of bourgeois literary theory. McCallum sees all three as valuable but incomplete attempts to rediscover the utopian moment in the aesthetic, and hints at the possibility of a "re-invested" aesthetic in a renewed process of (de)totalization and (re)construction. NANCY WOOD, *"Mothering the Child."* A sympathetic review of Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering* that situates it in the development rapprochement between Freudian and Marxist theory that is at the conceptual cutting edge of contemporary feminist thought. Chodorow is judged to have negotiated successfully the psychologism-sociologism trap that besets attempts at such a synthesis, and to have advanced the critical appropriation by feminism of central Freudian categories related to the Oedipus complex. PATRICIA HUGHES, *"On Liberty's Legacy."* Highly critical review of Himmelfarb's *On Liberty and Liberalism*, which argues that her wholesale reduction of Mill's internal contradictions as a thinker to the varying degree of real authorship in his work to be attributed to Harriet Taylor fundamentally misconstrues the very real inconsistencies in Mill's own position. Also, Hughes is unconvinced by the claim that *On Liberty* was actually authored by Taylor. AW

DIALECTICAL ANTHROPOLOGY, 4:3 (October 1979)

Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co., Journal Division, P.O. Box 211, 1000 AE Amsterdam, The Netherlands. $25.85 per year (4 issues). SUSAN LAYTON, *"The Search for the Primitive in Russian Literature: From Tolstoy to Pasternak."* A discussion of the primitive as a mode of consciousness. While pointing out the continuity in the Russian novelists' characterization of civilization as a ruthlessly repressive force and a structure of rational domination, the article is essentially non-critical. KEVIN DWYER, *"The Dialogic of Ethnology."* Using the metaphor of Pascal's "wager," Dwyer takes a tentative step toward a critical anthropology. A recognition of the anthropologist's vulnerability in a Lukacsian sense is seen as the precondition for this construction. VIANA MULLER, *"The Revolutionary Fate of the Peasantry."* The unspoken problematic is the question: at what price class consciousness for the peasantry? While many have asked this, no one, Muller included, has yet given a satisfactory answer. MONA ETIENNE, *"The Case for Social Maternity: Adoption of Children by Urban Baule Women."* Points out the position of Baule women as autonomous social actors in the social act of adoption, and refutes Claude Meillassoux's and Marvin Harris' contrary positions. DOMINIQUE LEGROS, DONALD HUNDERFUND, JUDITH SHAPIRO, *"Economic Base, Mode of Production, and Social Formation: A Discussion of Marx's Terminology."* A striking example of the naive analytical method of formulating Marx's terms and concepts, with complete disregard for the history of the texts. SHIRLEY LINDEBAUM: *"The Cultural Politics of West Iran."* A review of N. Sharp's *The Rule of the Sword.* DW

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY, 9:3 (Fall 1979)

M.E. Sharpe Inc., 901 N. Broadway, White Plains, N.Y. 10603. $30 per year (2-4 issues). This issue, containing six essays on Hong Kong, is an extremely disappointing collection of bourgeois sociological, economic and political scientific articles on Hong Kong. It marks a new low for the IJS. TIEN-TUNG HSUEH, *"Hong Kong's Model of Economic Development."* A mildly appreciative look by an orthodox economist at Hong Kong's economic policies (extreme laissez faire, free trade), the character of its economy (concentration on exports in selected industries), and its economic growth (generally better than the rest of east Asia). Quite technical. AMBROSE Y.C. KING, PETER J.L. MAN, *"The Small Factory in Economic Development: The Case of Hong Kong."* Hong Kong's economy combines small factories with modern technology. At least until the present, this has been relatively successful in sustaining a stable, high-output economy, thus refuting the assumption that development requires high technology accompanied by large plant size. SKU-KAI LAU, *"Employment Relations in Hong Kong: Traditional or Modern?"* A survey of Hong Kong employers shows that they generally adopt modern, pragmatic orientations toward employees, with, however, certain traditional values still embedded. FAI-MING WONG, *"Family Structure and Processes in Hong Kong."* Like the previous article, this sounds like bad 1950s American sociology. It is a functionalist description of the family in Hong Kong. Though

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the author considers it "a unique form of the modern Chinese family," the data he presents would not qualitatively distinguish it from a typical family of the U.S. TAK-SING CHEUNG, *"The Socially Malnourished Generation: An Anatomy of the Self-Image of a Student Population in Hong Kong."* The results of a social psychological instrument given to schoolchildren age 5-18 in Hong Kong serves as the basis for some interesting reflections on their anomic state. They display little or no anchoring in social categories (as compared to earlier studies of American students). This is more 1950s American sociology, but somewhat more interesting. HSUI-CHI KUAN, *"Political Stability and Change in Hong Kong."* Surprisingly, there has been little resistance to Britain's colonialism in Hong Kong's markedly depoliticized population. Dating from some public disturbances of 1976-77, the British colonial administrators have seen fit to encourage certain minimal forms of native participation in public affairs. MGL

MARXIST PERSPECTIVES, 2:4 (Winter 1979-80)

The Cliomar Corporation, 420 West End Ave., New York, NY 10024. $18 per year (4 issues). ANN LAUTERBACH, *"The Sunday Paper."* A poem. SILVIU BRUCAN, *"War and Peace Today."* Critically outlines the big questions and brings to them the perspective of a Marxist from a small socialist country with extensive ties to the Third World. MICHEL MELOT, *"Camille Pissarro in 1880: An Anarchist Artist in Bourgeois Society."* Explores the arts for a clue to the ideological use of such works. SIDNEY W. MINTZ, *"Time, Sugar and Sweetness."* About sweetness, the ghastly social price it has commanded, and the relationship between history and anthropology as currently practiced. STEPHEN ZELNICK, *"Melville's 'Bartleby, the Scrivener': A Study in History, Ideology and Literature."* A penetrating study that explores the arts further. ELIZABETH FOX-GENOVESE, *"The Personal Is Not Political."* Draws some of the lines that separate Marxist from bourgeois feminist on theoretical and practical issues. ERNEST MANDEL, *"A Critique of Eurocommunism."* A stern critique that casts doubt on whether Eurocommunism has or deserves a future. PAUL GOTTFRIED, *"Lukacs'* The Young Hegel." A critical look at Lukacs on Hegel. JONATHAN M. WIENER, *"Workingclass Consciousness in Germany."* A sympathetic but sharply critical evaluation of Barrington Moore's book on injustice in general and modern Germany in particular. OP

NEW GERMAN CRITIQUE, No. 17 (Spring 1979)

German Dept., Box 413, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI 53201. $6 per year (3 issues). ANSON RABINBACH, *"Critique and Commentary-Alchemy and Chemistry: Some Remarks on Walter Benjamin and this Special Issue."* Discusses Benjamin's use of the critique and the commentary within his work. PHILIP BREWSTER, CARL HOWARD BUCHNER, *"Language and Critique: Jürgen Habermas on Walter Benjamin."* The works of Benjamin are inseparable from the history of their reception. This history is embodied in the language theory that both Benjamin and Habermas share. JUERGEN HABERMAS, *"Consciousness-Raising or Redemptive Criticism — The Contemporaneity of Walter Benjamin."* Benjamin's theory of art develops a concept of culture based on the critique of ideology. At the same time, Benjamin's theory of art is a theory of experience interpreted by language, based on a mimetic theory of language to which Benjamin adhered throughout his lifetime. ANSON RABINBACH, *"Introduction to Walter Benjamin's 'Doctrine of the Similar.'"* A historical overview of the experiences and thoughts that led to writing the "Doctrine of the Similar." WALTER BENJAMIN, *"Doctrine of the Similar (1933)."* From a reading of the first chapter of Genesis, Benjamin develops a mimetic theory of language with its roots in the divine creation. IRVINE WOHLFORTH, *"Walter Benjamin's Image of Interpretation."* Benjamin is compared to other theorists. ANSGAR HILLACH, *"The Aesthetics of Politics: Walter Benjamin's 'Theories of German Fascism.'"* Historical background to the following essay. WALTER BENJAMIN, *"Theories of German Fascism: On the Collection of Essays 'War and Warriors' by Ernst Junger."* Glorification of the warrior as a form of romanticized cultural aesthetics that attempts to conceal economic and political interests that are served by such aesthetics. ELZBRIETA ETTINGER, *"Comrade and LOVER: Rosa Luxemburg's Letters to Leo Jogiches."* A biographical sketch of the social and political forces that came to bear upon the personal lives of Luxemburg and Jogiches. JLS

NEW LEFT REVIEW, No. 116 (July-August 1979)

7 Carlisle Street, London W1V 6NL, England. $16 per year (6 issues). MAXINE MOLYNEUX, *"Beyond the Domestic Labor Debate."* Challenges the underlying assumptions of the debate on domestic labor that has dominated most of the literature on women's oppression. Argues that the payment of a male wage sufficient to cover the living expenses of an unemployed female may

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represent a cost to capital rather than a gain, and that the labor involved in reproducing the next generation of workers is more significant than the housework required to support the daily reproduction of labor power. SEBASTIANO TIMPANARO, *"The Pessimistic Materialism of Giacomo Leopardi."* Leopardi's philosophical position sets him apart from other Romantic thinkers; he viewed nature as oppressive and wicked, and although he recognized the possibility of manipulating nature to alter its course, "it would never be possible to change those fundamental givens upon ... which unhappiness inevitably flows." Timpanaro defends Leopardi on the ground that man can never be freed from the oppression that nature exercises over him. ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, *"The Value Controversy and Social Research."* The article is organized around the labor theory of value's account of the determination of profits in capitalist societies. The author combines the various models developed by different schools of Marxist and post-Sraffian economics, and attempts to provide a more precise account. Wright argues that the labor theory of value is an indispensable tool for empirical research of capitalist social relations, and a theory based on this model becomes a critique of the very structure of possibilities in the existing society. Although Wright's model is clearly described, he provides no evidence to support his claims for its scope. JOHN SUDDABY, *"The Winter '79 Strikes in Camden."* A brief account of the labor struggle in Camden that began in 1974, and resulted in a victory for the workers in 1979. This movement was somewhat unusual in that it included service workers as well as skilled and unskilled laborers. Review, by ERNST BLOCK, of *Benjamin's Philosophical Cabaret.* HP

NEW LITERARY HISTORY, XI:1 (Autumn 1979)

Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Md. 21218. $11 per year (3 issues). WOLFGANG ISER, *"The Current Situation of Literary Theory: Key Concepts and the Imaginary."* It is unclear if literary theory refers to the theorizing about literature or about possible means of access to it: a hermeneutic relationship between theory and method would have to be developed around concepts of structure, function and communication. THOMAS METSCHER, *"Literature and Art as Ideological Form."* The key question of aesthetic cognition is: what kind of 'knowledge' does art mediate? Metscher's exploration of the question still relies on an assumption that art is, at its basis, a sophisticated form of reflection. FREDRIC JAMESON, *"Marxism and Historicism."* The master code in Marxism (the mode of production) projects a totalizing structure through which other critical methods find subordinate structural positions. Jameson examines four moments of historicism (antiquarianism, existential historicism, structural typology, Nietzschean) and explores the possibility of superseding their positions. MICHAL GLOWINSKI, *"Reading, Interpretation, Reception."* Reception theory is not concerned with the psychology of reading, but rather its historical-cultural aspects. RIEN T. SEGERS, *"An Interview with Hans Robert Jauss."* ALASTAIR FOWLER, *"Genre and the Literary Canon."* A survey of the shifts in the generic hierarchy from the Renaissance (epic at the apex) to the dominance of the novel. GERALD L. BURNS, *"Allegory and Satire: A Rhetorical Meditation."* Rhetorical criticism does not address itself to meaning, but asks "What can be said about a given text." The assumptions of Burns' inquiry are close to those of the New Criticism. JEAN STAROBINSKI, *"Rousseau's Happy Days."* An analysis of Rousseau's account of St. Pierre in the fifth *Reverie*. STANLEY CAVELL, *"Thinking of Emerson."* A critical reflection on his own work on *Walden*. Emerson's philosophy does not derive from Kant so much as it anticipates Heidegger. An ahistorical account that seems oblivious to the specific context in which existentialism emerged. JOHN T. IRWIN, *"Self-Evidence and Self-Reference: Nietzsche and Tragedy, Whitman and Opera."* The structure of the will, immediately intuited, is musical. For Nietzsche, the Apollonian-Dionysian interplay solves the inadequacy of words; for Whitman, the interplay is figurative. FRANCIS RUSSELL HART, *"History Talking to Itself."* "When the forced intimacy of contemporary societies has banished the autobiographical "I," memoir is displaced to events, eras, institutions. PM

OUR GENERATION, 13:3 (Summer 1979)

3981 Boulevard Saint-Laurent, Montreal, Que. Canada H2W 1Y5. $7.50 per year (4 issues). KOULA MELLOS, *"The Chance Game Industry and Mass Culture."* Chance games redistribute money and serve the expansion of capital; at the same time, culturally, the idea of equality of opportunity is displaced from work to leisure. MARIE L. CAMPBELL, *"Unlocking Women's Experience."* Shows that what appeared as working women's testimony to the Royal Commission on Labor in British Columbia, 1912-1914, was shaped by *others*: women of another class, male trade unionists and businessmen. DAVID J. BAUGH, *"Franchising Friedman: The Fraser Institute."* A brief exposé of right-wing economics and the Fraser's pernicious work. MURRAY BOOKCHIN, *"Marxism as Bourgeois Sociology."* Vintage, iconoclastic Bookchin: reads

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Marxism as mystification and as an apology for capitalism whose basic categories Marxism shares uncritically. Outlines the need for a critical theory touching on domination, hierarchy, relations between man and nation, and the prospects of human self-management. Plus book reviews, including a debate between Martin Meissner and the authors around Pat and Hugh Armstrong's *The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and their Segregated Work.* JAF

OUR GENERATION, 13:4 (Fall 1979)

EDITORIAL, *"State Power and Party Politics."* On why the Parti Québéçois government lost the November 1979 by-elections. JEAN-GUY VAILLANCOURT, *"The Ecology Manifesto and the Growth of the Movement in Quebec."* Introduces the manifesto following it by reviewing the formation in Quebec of a coalition of progressive ecology groups and ecologically oriented individuals, described as a new social movement prefiguring a new mode of social development. REGROUPEMENT ECOLOGIQUE QUEBECOIS (Montreal region), *"The Ecology Manifesto."* A challenge to capitalism, proposing a new eco-social direction for global human survival and progress, concretized in a detailed social program of action. ARNOLD BENNETT, *"Ecology and the Alternative Economy."* The program and demands of the ecology manifesto require building an alternative economic structure through conscious application of the power of the labor and cooperative movements. BILL FREEMAN, *"The Ecology Movement and the Radical Project: Ecology vs. Marxism."* Marxism is authoritarian and outmoded. The democratic, participatory and forward-looking ecology movement renews the radical project. DIMITRI ROUSSOPOULOS, *"On the Nuclear State."* The ecology manifesto is naive and contradictory in its reliance on the state. Deconstructing the growing power of the (nuclear) state over society is the greatest challenge facing ecologists. The ecological problem must be grasped in its full historic dimensions. LUCIA KOWALUK, *"Ecology and the Individual."* Ecological consciousness must be practically integrated into the daily lifestyles of individuals. CHARLES LEVINSON, *"Vodka-Cola: Who Really Benefits from Detente?"* An interview with the secretary-general of the International Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers' Union, where he describes the new convergence between Western multinational manufacturers and Communist governments (who can deliver cheap labor and work discipline), and sketches the negative consequences of the workings of an 'elitist overworld.' Cf. his book, *Vodka-Cola.* PEGGY DUFF, *"What Happened to the New International Economic Order between 1974 and 1979."* On the structure of economic relations between rich and poor countries. Plus book reviews. JAF

THE PHILOSOPHICAL FORUM, 10:2 (Fall 1979)

P.O. Box 247, Boston University Station, Boston, MA 02215. $10 per year (4 issues). BRUCE KUKLICK, *"The Changing Character of Philosophizing in America."* A discussion of changing trends in American philosophy over 250 years. Argues that the loss of a role for philosophy has likewise drained all its meaning except for the professional philosopher. RICHARD PELLS, *"From Community to Conformity: Social Criticism in the Postwar Years."* A critique of postwar philosophy and its thinkers who articulated social and moral concerns that became the focal point of reactionary politics in the 1960s and 1970s. RICHARD SCHULDENFREI, *"Dualistic Physicalism in Quine: A Radical Critique."* Places the significant aspects of Quine's philosophy into social perspective, noting the general direction and thrust of Quine's views, and also criticizes Quine's shortcomings, particularly his conception of science, offering Dewey's conception as an alternative. ARTHUR LOTHSTEIN, *"Salving from the Dross: John Dewey's Anarcho-communalism."* Argues that a liberating strain of anarcho-communalism in his work would justify considering Dewey as a radical social philosopher. NIKHIL BHATTACHARYA, *"Psychology and Rationality: The Structure of Mead's Problem."* A critical examination of Mead's philosophy in an effort to understand what Mead considered rationality to be. In his attempt to develop Mead's views, he argues that the generally held views of human life and its science did not emphasize sufficiently the functional and active aspects inherent in them. JLS

POLITICAL THEORY, 7:3 (August 1979)

Sage Publications Inc., 275 South Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212. $16.50 per year (4 issues). FRED ROSEN, *"Marxism, Mysticism, and Liberty: The Influence of Simone Weil on Albert Camus."* Claims Camus adopted Weil's critique of Marxism and patterned the rebel after the artisan who, for Weil, represented unalienated man. Rosen maintains that, although the influence of Weil's Christian mysticism is evident in Camus' later works, he remained antagonistic to absolute values because they lead to domination. Of most interest is Rosen's recognition of themes relevant to the 20th century, especially Camus and Weil on the

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technocratic state as a new form of oppression, the degradation of work, and the implications of dogmatism for genuine politics. CHARLES HELM, MARIO MORELLI, *"Stanley Milgram and the Obedience Experiment: Authority, Legitimacy, and Human Action."* Criticizes Milgram's experiments for their artificial setting, lack of precise definition of key concepts and their operationalization, Milgram's "over-socialized" view of man, and Milgram's essential behaviorism. Except for a brief glimmer that the authors are attempting to invoke a phenomenological explanation, however, the critique remains arid formalism. More disturbing still is the willingness to grant legitimacy to the political status quo of the U.S. SHMUEL HARLAP, *"Thrasymachus' Justice."* Issues of general interest are embedded in a turgid account that identifies the author's position within the literature on the subject. Raises provocative questions in its less esoteric moments about the relationship of justice, politics, morality and self-interest. JAMES COTTON, *"James Harrington as Aristotelian."* Clear, concise presentation of Harrington's "unmediated" indebtedness to Aristotle. Refutes Leo Strauss' view that Harrington is a "modern" political theorist who breaks with ancient political thought. Maintains that Harrington claims to advance and perfect this tradition. SUZANNE DUVALL JACOBITTI, *"Causes, Reasons and Voting."* An everyday language critique of the behaviorist approach to voting analysis. Asserts that individual explanations of action are indispensable if we are to understand voting, and that everyday language provides adequate criteria for judging the reliability of individual self-explanations regarding voting behavior. Communications and reviews. RJ

RADICAL SCIENCE JOURNAL, No. 9 (1979)

29 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1, England. 4.50 pounds per year (3 issues). MIKE HALES, *"Down with the Consumption of Knowledge: An Open Letter to Academics."* Argues for a convergence of practice with academics' work: a repeat of the demand for the unity of theory and practice without much consideration of the complex relationships that keep them apart. KARL FIGLIO, *"Sinister Medicine? A Critique of Left Approaches to Medicine."* The left approaches have been based on untheorized experience rather than coherent political discourse. The effect of this position is to assume that the transformation of medicine involves a change in political structures at large. GIANNA POMATA, *"Seveso: Safety in Numbers?"* Because scientific data about dioxin were so contradictory and sparse, the community of Seveso came to see itself as victimized by the erratic efforts of public authorities, not by La Roche. LES LEVIDOW, *"Three Mile Island: The Ideology of 'Safe Level' as a Material Force."* Metropolitan Edison authorities shifted public concern away from a possible core meltdown to the question of safe levels of radiation exposure. Plus reviews and exchanges. PM

SCIENCE AND SOCIETY, 43:3 (Fall 1979)

Room 4331, John Jay College, CUNY, 445 W. 59th Street, New York, NY 10019. $10 per year (4 issues); single copies $2.50. JOHN WEEKS, *"The Process of Accumulation and the 'Profit Squeeze' Hypothesis."* A critique of the hypothesis of profit squeeze in connection with accumulation and crisis, and related complex processes. ANEVAR SHAIKH, *"Foreign Trade and the Law of Value: Part I."* An extension of Marx's law of value to the question of foreign trade and a critique of theories of unequal exchange. E.K. HUNT, *"The Categories of Productive and Unproductive Labor in Marxist Economic Theory."* A discussion of differentiation made between productive and unproductive labor attributed to Marx and a critique of Marx's writing on the subject with suggestions for alternative uses of these categorical terms. LUDO CUYVERS, *"Joan Robinson's Theory of Economic Growth."* The author presents a comparison of Robinson's theory of economic growth with the work of Marx, denoting her work as essentially neo-Marxist in the post-Keynesian sense. This is a contribution to the Marxist debate on the theory of accumulation. Review article by MICHAEL A. LEBOWITZ, *"Heller on Marx's Concept of Needs."* Plus book reviews. RS

SCIENCE AND SOCIETY, 43:4 (Winter 1979-80)

JOHN F.D. OHIORHENUAN, *"Dependence and Non-capitalist Development in the Caribbean: Historical Necessity and Degrees of Freedom."* Counterposes dependency theory to the practice of non-capitalist development that has emerged in the Caribbean. JACOB MORRIS, *"Profit Rates and Capital Formation in American Monopoly Capitalism."* Criticizes remarks by Arthur Burns, former chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, in regard to the annual profitability of American business corporations, relying on Marx's theory of the falling rate of profit as modified by Gillman. Makes predictions about the future of the economic situation in the light of Keynesian vs. Burnsian stimulation of business.

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RICHARD GARFIELD, *"The Philosophical Basis of Modern Chinese Medicine."* Discusses the political and medical implications of combining Western and Oriental systems of medical thought and practice. GERALDINE SKINNER, *"José Carlos Mariatequi and the Emergence of the Peruvian Socialist Movement."* Examines Mariatequi's connection with the development of the Partido Comunista Peruano and discusses his political theory. GLENN PETERSON, *"Breadfruit or Rice? The Political Economics of a Vote in Micronesia."* Presents a brief history of U.S. involvement with Micronesia as a U.N. Trust territory, and illustrates how the U.S. has maintained domination of the islands through this relationship. NANCY HARTSOCK, NEIL SMITH, *"On Althusser's Misreading of Marx's 1857 'Introduction.'"* A criticism of the view Althusser takes on the distinction between abstract and concrete as relating to Marx's explanation of scientific method. Plus book reviews. RS

SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES, No. 18 (July 1979)

Arts Building, McGill University, 853 Sherbrooke Street W., Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2T6. $8 per year (3 issues). ALBERT I. BERGER, *"Nuclear Energy: Science's Fiction's Metaphor of Power."* Before World War II, under John Campbell's influence, writers organized their stories around atomic power as a metaphoric representation of unlimited technological capability. JOHN FEKETE, *"The Dispossessed and Triton: Act and System in Utopian Science Fiction."* A literary debate over Enlightenment rationalism and the problematic of emancipation, cast in the form of projected anarchist societies, is examined as to its ideological characteristics and its relation to theoretical problems posed by administered society. JORG HIENGER, *"The Uncanny and Science Fiction."* An excerpt from the author's Literarische Zukunftsphantastik, concerned with the conditions of the literary eruption of the uncanny as an irreducibly opaque space within the limits of reason. DAGMAR BARNOUW, *"Science Fiction as a Model for Probabilistic Worlds: Stanislaw Lem's Fantastic Empiricism."* On Lem's theory of science fiction as an aesthetic mode of cognitive estrangement with the capacity to illuminate the social construction of behavior and to refer critically to the empirical world. JOHN OWER, *"'Aesop' and the Ambiguity of Clifford Simak's City."* Suggests that Simak asserts the relativity and contingency of all values. MARC ANGENOT, DARKO SUVIN, *"Not Only but Also: Reflections on Cognition and Ideology in Science Fiction and SF Criticism."* A review of fundamental principles, stressing that art is both semantically full and polysemous, unlike games (semantically empty and non-referential) and scientific models (semantically full but monosemous); combineld with a typology of false consciousness in science fiction and science fiction criticism. JEANNE MURRAY WALKER, *"Myth, Exchange and History in the Left Head of Darkness."* An application of Levi-Strauss to myth analysis in Le Buin. SYLVIA PUKALLUS, RONALD M. HAHN, HORST PUKALLUS, *"'Perry Rhodan' as a Social and Ideological Phenomenon."* Examines the best-selling SF series in West Germany (possibly in the world: more than 800 books in it, with 500 million copies of them sold), as to its thematic character, its relation to its sociological milieu of reception (fan clubs), and its ideological nature (militarist, racist, sexist, imperialist, totalitarian). FRANZ ROTTENSTEINER, *"Some German Writings on Science Fiction."* R.D. MULLEN, *"No Time for Evolution."* Informative review essay discussing Robert A. Heinbin. DAVID KETTERER, *"Frankenstein in Wolf's Clothing."* Plus book reviews, notes and correspondence. JAF

SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES, No. 19 (November 1979)

GREGORY BENFORD, SAMUEL DELANY, ROBERT SCHOLES, ALAN J. FRIEDMAN, JOHN WOODCOCK, *"Teaching Science Fiction: Unique Challenges."* Transcription of the proceedings of the MLA Special Session (1978). CHARLES ELKINS, DARKO SUVIN, *"Preliminary Reflections on Teaching Science Fiction Critically."* Considers the sociological traits of SF, its historical origin as a tension between ideology and utopia, and its critical horizons as a function of its aesthetic modulation between identification and distanciation. Pedagogical variations may reinforce or challenge the dominant culture. LOWRY PEI, *"Poor Singletons: Definitions of Humanity in the Stories of James Tiptree Jr."* Tiptree's fiction is ambivalent; it searches for definitions of humanity in thematic paradoxes, but may itself display tendencies as fanatical as those it depicts. INA RAE HARK, *"Unity in the Composite Novel: Triadic Patterning in Asimov's The Gods Themselves."* MARTIN SCHAEFER, *"The Rise and Fall of Antiutopia: Utopia, Gothic Romance, Dystopia."* Traces the literary and ideological antecedents of the dystopian form to show that at least originally, it was a continuation of utopianism, although now it needs to redevelop its implicit utopianism in order to redeem its critical intention. ANDRZEJ ZGORZELSKI, *"Is Science Fiction a Genre of Fantastic Literature?"* Basic historical genre theorizing that posits a necessary coexistence of objective structural change and

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reader awareness of genre change. Accordingly, places the birth of SF in the late 1930s and describes its generic conventions as functionally opposed to the realist tradition as well as to the secondary generic conventions of fantastic literature. GEORGE LOCKE, *"An English Science Fiction Magazine, 1919."* A detailed description of the contents of Pears Annual for 1919, devoted to fantasies and conjectures about 1969. DAVID Y. HUGHES, *"Criticism in English of H.G. Wells' Science Fiction: A Select Annotated Bibliography."* 85 entries. CARLO PAGETTI, *"28 Years of Science Fiction Criticism in Italy, 1953-1978."* ROBERT M. PHILMUS, *"In Search of Orwell."* SAMUEL R. DELANY, *"The Order of Chaos."* On Joanna Russ. PATRICK PARRINDER, *"Delany Inspects the Word-Beast."* Plus book reviews and notes. JAF

SCREEN, 20.3-4 (Winter 1979-80)

29 Old Compton Street, London W1V 5PL, England. $20 per year (4 issues). *Screen* plus *Screen Education,* $26 for 4 issues of each publication. STUART HOOD, *"Brecht on Radio."* Background on radio technology in the 1920s with an account of Brecht's intervention in radio to "renew ideological institutions." BERTOLT BRECHT, *"Radio as a Means of Communication."* Radio must be transformed from a system of distribution to a system of communication in order to "combat that *inconsequentiality* which makes nearly all our public institutions so laughable." GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH, *"Radio On."* An analysis of *Radio On* as a film inserted into the context of a non-existent British cinema. His analysis emphasizes the structuralist keynotes of the absence of subjectivity and subjective narration. ROD STONEMAN, *"Film-Related Practice and the Avant-Garde."* The formal discontinuities in avant-garde can lay bare the institutionalized relationship between spectator and film. MALCOLM LE GRICE, *"Toward Temporal Economy."* An analysis of his own work in terms of its challenge to the relationship of catharsis between spectator and film and his opposition to dominant conditions of production, distribution and finance. Plus catalogue of Le Grice's films. PAM COOK, *"Star Signs."* An analysis of the idealized star figure as a unified subject. Can the knowledge that theory has produced of the contradictions within the construction of the subject develop a different concept of subjectivity? LESLEY STERN, *"Feminism and Cinema Exchanges."* Feminism within film criticism confronts a possible impasse between the demand for a new and different language and the difficulties of creating it in praxis. Based on a review of Edinburgh festival films. PAUL KERR, *"Edinburgh Television Festival 1979."* JOHN WYVER, *"The Debate on TV4."* The case for a fourth television channel in England has been the need to provide a distinctive service; but without the commitment of 100 percent of government financing, independent producers will not gain access. KEVIN ROCKETT, *"Irish Cinema."* An analysis of these Irish films: in particular, *Lament for Art O'Leary* attempts "consciously to present an emotive history and relate it directly to the present." RICHARD KEARNEY, *"Joyce on Language, Women and Politics."* On Colin MacCabe's *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word.* Plus reviews. PM

SCREEN EDUCATION, No. 32 (Autumn-Winter 1979-80)

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*Institute Productions, 1977-1978.* PAM COOK, *"Teaching Avant-Garde Film: Notes Toward Practice."* The decentered relationship of subject to discourse in the avant-garde film can work to break down dominant models of teaching. CLAUDE BAILBLE, *"Programming the Look: A New Approach to Teaching Film Technique."* An examination of the distinction (untenable) between technician and artist in filmmaking, which draws on Lacanian psychoanalysis and optics to analyze the process of looking at a film. Plus short reviews. PM

SOCIALIST REVIEW, No. 47

New Fronts Publishing Co., 4228 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, CA 94609. $15 per year (6 issues). ROGER S. GOTTLIEB, *"The Dialectics of National Identity: Left-Wing Antisemitism and the Arab-Israeli Conflict."* Gottlieb defends Zionism against leftist criticism by removing anti-Semitism and Jewish identity from the traditional Marxist framework. PETER JOHNSON, *"Ahistorical Dialectics: A Response to Roger Gottlieb."* Johnson accuses Gottlieb of being ahistorical, idealistic and factually in error. ROGER S. GOTTLIEB, *"The Dialectics of National Identity Revisited: Reply to Johnson."* JANE JENSON, GEORGE ROSS, *"Strategies in Conflict: The 23rd Congress of the French Communist Party."* An excellent non-participating observer's account of the French Communist Party's inner-party politics during the three months preceding the 23rd Congress. Shows both the opening up of rank-and-file debate and the still powerful pressure from the leadership for unity around the party line. *"Community and Electoral Politics: An Interview with Mike Rotkin and Bruce Van Allen."* The first interview with these two self-proclaimed socialist-feminists immediately after their recent election to the Santa Cruz, Calif., city council discusses the importance of their long-standing grass roots activism in their electoral victory. The second interview — four months later — focuses on the problems leftists confront while holding elective positions in government. CAROL HATCH, *"Socialist Feminism and the Workplace."* Hatch traces the root of socialist feminists' unconcern with organizing women workers back to the political history out of which socialist feminism emerged. DOUGLAS KELLNER, *"In Remembrance of Herbert Marcuse, 1898-1979.* Plus reviews. GWA

THEORY AND SOCIETY, 8:2 (September 1979)

Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co., 52 Vanderbilt Ave., New York, NY 10017. $24.50 per year. CORNELIUS DISCO, *"Critical Theory as Ideology of the New Class."* Uses Gouldner's theory of the new class to examine Habermas. On the basis of a brief historical discussion of Gramsci's theory of intellectuals, Disco presents Habermas' theory of communicative competence as an elaborated ideology, and Habermas as an enemy of true Marxists since he has replaced class struggle with the internal dialectics of the new class. ROBERT WUTHNOW, *"The Emergence of Modern Science and World System Theory."* Uses Wallerstein's view of a decentralized, multicentric political structure of the 17th-century European world economy to explain the migration of scientists from one country to another for political reasons, facilitating the emergence of modern science. CHANDRA MUKERJI, *"Mass Culture and the Modern World System."* This is a historical piece using a description of printing to illustrate the growth of a modern world system which breaks down traditional forms of cultural production. Argues that mass and elite cultures emerged simultaneously in the 15th century and that mass culture is not a degradation of elite culture. Both types of culture were born in the Renaissance as forms of rebellion against medieval craft guilds. DEVEREAUX KENNEDY, *"Michel Foucault: The Archaeology and Sociology of Knowledge."* An introduction to Foucault and four of his major works: sometimes clear, often cloudy, so that one really does not get as much of a feel for Foucault as for Kennedy's own preferences. TODD GITLIN, *"Domesticating Nature."* A nice piece of literature showing how capitalism captures nature in the physical structures of Hyatt Regencies. RER

THEORY AND SOCIETY, 8:3 (November 1979)

R.W. CONNELL, *"A Critique of the Althusserian Approach to Class."* A look at Althusser's abstractly militant theory of class which justifies a revolutionary vanguard led by an intellectual elite using Marxist science. This European Stalinism is seen as dangerous since it might discourage research that could actually be helpful to those desiring to guide revolutions. KARIN D. KNORR, *"Tinkering Toward Success: Prelude to a Theory of Scientific Practice."* Another repetitious, at times interesting, explanation of how unrigorous research often is. The focus is on the variation within the ongoing experimental process. It is suggested that scientific research is not, and should not be, a rigid routine. MICHAEL HECHTER, *"Notes on Marxism and Sociology in the USA."* Points out the increasing popularity of Marxism and some of its variations, particularly the bourgeois version. DAVID HOGAN, *"Capitalism, Liberalism and*

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*Schooling."* Discusses Bowles and Gintis' *Schooling in Capitalist America.* A good critical examination of the liberal political economy of education and the dynamics of educational change that shows a good research program and its concomitant difficulties. There is a long section of book reviews of the following: Stinchcombe, *Theoretical Methods in Social History,* McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Habermas,* Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I,* Wolfe, *The Limits of Legitimacy,* Wright, *Class, Crisis and the State,* and Bendix, *Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule.* RER

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